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RESEARCH REPORT

DOCUMENTATION OF BEST PRACTICES
ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

DISTINCT
HOUSING NEEDS
SERIES



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DOCUMENTATION OF BEST PRACTICES ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

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INTRODUCTION

"Best practices" is a term used in a wide variety of contexts to refer to actions, initiatives or projects from which others can learn, adapting them to their own situations. The best practices in this document are innovative approaches, transferable to other organizations, which have resulted in concrete, sustainable improvements in the lives of homeless persons in Canada.

Through discussions with agencies involved in homelessness, it was determined that sharing of best practices would be worthwhile. Initiatives to consider and criteria to be used in identifying best practice projects were put forward by the Discussion Group on Homelessness (representatives of municipal, provincial and federal government departments, as well as representatives from national organizations interested in homelessness) of the National Housing Research Committee.

The selection criteria for choosing effective practices included:

- involvement of homeless persons and front-line service providers in developing solutions;
- empowerment of homeless persons to access services, develop skills and actively pursue the goal of independence;

- a safe and secure environment, especially for vulnerable groups such as women, children and youth; and
- provision of a variety of services to respond to the varying needs of the homeless populations.

Ten projects, from a cross section of agencies involved with homelessness, were selected to be documented. These projects represent the various types of initiatives addressing homelessness (e.g., prevention, street outreach, shelter, rehabilitation, supportive housing), the different Canadian geographical regions and the kinds of homeless people (e.g., women with children, young people and single men). The project descriptions were written by the agencies themselves, with funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Six projects were fully documented and include an executive summary, fact sheet, project history, client profile, management and financial profile, and a description of each project's overall philosophy and approach. Four other projects were documented in a more condensed form.

Sandy Merriman House
(Victoria, British Columbia)

Prepared by:
Victoria Cool Aid Society

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sandy Merriman House (SMH), a 15-bed shelter for women, came into being as a result of the Downtown Women's Project, a community development initiative which involved homeless and low-income women in addressing their shelter and housing needs. Funding for the process came from all levels of government, and capital funding for the creation of a shelter came from several provincial ministries. The construction phase included a training program through which street-involved and long-term unemployed women gained skills and work experience while helping to build the shelter. The capital cost was \$1,629,000, including \$444,000 property acquisition costs.

Facilitating factors that contributed to the Project's success included the following.

- The project coordinator had a strong ability to mobilize and blend resources from diverse agencies.
- The downtown community had a strong sense of ownership of the Project due to the community development process that occurred in the early stages.
- The local neighbourhood was very supportive.
- There was a commitment to continue with the inclusive, peer-centred approach right through to the operational stage.

Obstacles included:

- a lack of consensus on the relative priority of training and construction;
- substance misuse by trainees; and
- difficulty in working with diverse funding agencies.

Lessons included:

- establish a strong stakeholder consultation mechanism; and
- use lessons from other facilities in the design.

The Sandy Merriman House offers overnight shelter from 7:00 p.m. to 10:30 a.m. and its daily Drop-In program from 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Both program elements provide:

- safe, comfortable, welcoming environments;
- meals;
- laundry and shower facilities;
- one-to-one support; and
- referrals to community agencies and support groups.

The Drop-In also offers:

- discussion groups on life skill issues;
- visits from local agencies;
- computer access; and
- self-serve snacks.

The shelter serves an average of 470 women per year. Average length of stay is eight days. In 1998, the SMH Drop-In program served 1,090 women, including 777 women not using the shelter. Many clients are homeless and dealing with serious and persistent mental illness. Many work in the sex trade.

The SMH operates within a peer support model. Staff strive to be non-judgmental, to offer support in a respectful manner and to provide advice only when requested. The SMH provides its services in a fundamentally empowering way, recognizing that the women it serves have typically had negative experiences with institutions and mainstream services. Creating a climate where clients can develop a sense of ownership of the facility is the key in starting to reverse patterns of alienation and marginalization.

The SMH faces three main challenges over the next five years:

- expansion and diversification of funding;
- development of operating standards and a policies and procedures manual; and
- development of permanent, affordable housing.

FACT SHEET

Sandy Merriman House
809 Burdett Avenue
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 1K8

Description

The Sandy Merriman House (SMH), a 15-bed shelter for women, is a restored heritage home located in downtown Victoria. It is operated by the Victoria Cool Aid Society, a large non-profit agency that also operates the Streetlink Emergency Shelter and the Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter. The SMH has been in operation since December 1995.

Impetus

Before the opening of the SMH, there were no services in Victoria specifically targeting homeless and inadequately housed women. Men comprise the overwhelming majority of emergency shelter users, and women reported feeling uncomfortable and sometimes unsafe when staying at existing facilities.

Financial

The capital cost of the SMH was \$1,629,000, including \$444,000 property acquisition costs. The annual operating cost, including the Drop-In program, is about \$416,000.

Sources of funding

The construction of the SMH (as part of the Downtown Women's Project) was funded by the Ministry of Social Services, the Ministry of Employment and Investment, and the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour. The operation of Sandy Merriman is funded by the B.C. Ministry of Human Resources.

Clientele

Most SMH clients (about 85 per cent) are women aged 19 to 45. Many are homeless and dealing with serious and persistent mental illness. Many work in the sex trade. The most frequently

documented barriers faced by SMH clients are mental health issues, addictions, disabilities, histories of abuse, lack of education and lack of work experience.

Services offered

The SMH offers overnight shelter from 7:00 p.m. to 10:30 a.m. and its daily Drop-In program from 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Both program elements provide meals, laundry and shower facilities, one-to-one support and referrals to community agencies and support groups. The Drop-In component also offers discussion groups on life skill issues, visits from community agencies, computer access and self-serve snacks.

Innovative features

The SMH has several innovative features:

- provision of service to women under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol;
- a small, home-like facility;
- inclusion of non-shelter services through the Drop-In program; and
- a high level of responsiveness to client suggestions.

Major challenges in the next five years

The SMH and Cool Aid face three main challenges over the next five years:

- expansion and diversification of funding;
- development of operating standards and a policies and procedures manual; and
- development of permanent, affordable housing.

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PROJECT HISTORY

History of the Downtown Women's Project: Development Phase

Impetus, identification of need, major actors at development stage

The impetus for the Downtown Women's Project was the recognition that Victoria's inner-city shelters and other social services were male dominated. A two-year community development project working with homeless people in the downtown core of Victoria primarily had focussed on men. City of Victoria social planning consultant Jannit Rabinovitch and partners in that initiative realized there was a need for a process focussed on women that would address issues such as emergency shelter.

No existing social services in Victoria specifically targeted homeless and inadequately housed women. Although women could access a range of downtown services, men comprised the overwhelming majority of regular users of the soup kitchen (the 9-10 Club), the Open Door, Streetlink Emergency Shelter, Gateway Emergency Shelter and the Victoria Street Community Association. Some women reported feeling uncomfortable and sometimes unsafe at existing shelters.¹

The Downtown Women's Project emerged in early 1994 as a community development initiative designed to involve poor women in addressing their needs. Project coordinator Jannit Rabinovitch tells the story of how the Project started:

It started with me, with funding from the provincial Healthy Communities Initiative and the City of Victoria. We also had a writer, funded by Secretary of State. Initially there was only one street woman who would really talk to me extensively. I slowly established a relationship with four women in the downtown core: a prostitute/addict, an ex-convict, an aboriginal physically disabled woman, and an ex-street outreach worker.

The subsequent community process included a six-month series of large public meetings (35 to 60 women attended each) held in different locations downtown. Numerous ideas emerged, and creating an emergency shelter became a high priority. A lot of input was gathered on the planning for such a facility. Housing, training and employment were identified as long-term priorities.

Political and social context

There was strong consensus among service providers and community members that any programs resulting from the Project had to be focussed on street people.

The Project's first initiative, the development of an emergency shelter for women, was carried out under the auspices of the Greater Victoria Women's Shelter Society.

The project coordinator served as a bridge between the world of street-involved women and government bureaucrats. She focussed on finding out how to implement the recommendations arising from the community process. This involved actively lobbying and finding where the money was in various ministries. Rabinovitch said: "I was acting as an interpreter—street people didn't come to government meetings. There was no way to have them come together."

Funding for purchase of the property and construction of the facility was obtained from the Ministry of Social Services; the Ministry of Employment and Investment (BC21 Special Account application endorsed by the Ministry of Women's Equality); and the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour. The development process was funded by the Secretary of State, Women's Programs; the Ministry of Health, Healthy Communities Initiative; the Ministry of Attorney General; and the City of Victoria. Funding for research, writing and program development was provided by the Capital Regional District Health Department and the University of Victoria.

Objectives in the construction phase

The construction phase had two sets of objectives: those related to training disadvantaged women and those related to the construction itself.

The intended clientele of the shelter were involved in the construction phase as participants in the Construction Skills Training Program of the Downtown Women's Project. The program was designed to train long-term unemployed women in basic carpentry. Gaining marketable skills and doing personal development work were intended as steps toward getting back into the work force. The program focussed on enhancing job readiness and self-esteem through hands-on, paid work experience, mentoring support, tutoring, group process and counselling. Specific training objectives were to:

- provide/upgrade construction skills for up to 12 women on social assistance;
- prepare them to face the realities of a construction site;
- provide/upgrade math skills;
- help them acquire life skills and address personal development issues; and
- assist them in addressing barriers to employment.²

The construction objectives were to complete the renovation on time and on budget. These were in conflict with the training objectives. Given the reality of construction time lines and budgets, the project struggled to strike a balance between helping the women overcome personal and situational barriers and meeting the demands of a construction project.

Obstacles encountered and facilitating factors

Obstacles encountered by the Downtown Women's Project included:

- ***Priority of training vs. construction.*** The project team disputed how much counselling the participants should get. Philosophical differences arose during the training, particularly regarding the challenge of combining the outcome-focussed activity (construction) with

the personal development process of participants. Communications broke down and staff meetings stopped happening.

- ***Substance misuse by trainees.*** Drug and alcohol misuse by some trainees did not stop, despite a signed agreement requiring them to be clean and sober. Recognizing that for this population the state of being clean and sober is usually temporary, it would have been helpful to have a project team member whose background was primarily in the field of alcohol and drug misuse.
- ***Diversity of funding agencies.*** One key challenge was working with the variety of ministries involved. The coordinator spent a great deal of time in meetings to coordinate the involvement of the various funding agencies. In retrospect, however, she recognized that having a number of different agencies was "absolutely essential in order to work outside of the parameters of existing programs."

Facilitating factors that contributed to the Project's success included:

- ***Strong skills of the project coordinator.*** As indicated, the project coordinator had strong skills in working directly with the intended clientele and to mobilize and blend resources from diverse agencies. The Project succeeded, in part because of this combination of skills, in facilitating the trust and involvement of street women and in working with multiple bureaucracies.
- ***Sense of ownership within the downtown community.*** The downtown community had a strong sense of ownership of the Project due to the inclusive community development process that occurred in the early stages.
- ***Local neighbourhood support.*** The local neighbourhood was very supportive of the Project, in part because the building was in a state of disrepair. Owners and residents of

neighbouring low-rise apartment buildings were relieved when the Project proposed to transform an eyesore into a beautifully restored heritage building.

- ***Commitment to a client-centred approach.*** The Project was strongly committed to an inclusive, client-centred approach. The involvement of street women in the construction of a shelter for their community was an innovative way to achieve empowerment. This approach set the tone for the subsequent operation of the facility within a peer support model.

Lessons

Lessons learned through the Downtown Women's Project included the following.

- ***Establish a strong consultation mechanism.*** The Project did not establish a formal input mechanism. Looking back, Rabinovitch expressed regret about not ensuring that the organization taking on the Project would be required to be accountable to the community: "Final authority went to the Women's Shelter Society, which took over the policy and functional decisions without any consultation. The four trainers answered to the Board. It became a traditional power structure despite the best of intentions."
- ***Use lessons from other facilities to inform the design.*** More extensive observation and consultation with other emergency shelters may have helped avoid certain problems. Cool Aid executive director Jane Dewing commented: "They should have attached a dining room onto the drop-in centre. There was no connecting with Cool Aid about Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter about what worked and what didn't." Staff of the SMH commented on how the fridge and dishwasher should have been commercial quality. Another design flaw was that the top floor of the facility, a large attic room, had no particular use and therefore has been underutilized.

History of Sandy Merriman House: Operational Phase

The facility was named after one of the women who participated in the construction phase. Sandy Merriman died from an accidental drug overdose, and other participants felt strongly that the shelter should bear her name.

In the weeks immediately prior to opening, it was determined that funding was only sufficient to operate the shelter 16 hours per day. Seven months after opening, the SMH secured funding through the Ministry of Human Resources Community Services Fund to open the daytime Drop-In program. This program brought SMH closer to achieving the original objective of having 24-hour service. It also provided increased opportunity to provide one-to-one support. Through the Drop-In program, the SMH came to serve women not currently in the shelter.

In March 1998, responsibility for the operation of the SMH moved from the Greater Victoria Women's Shelter Society (GVWSS) to the Victoria Cool Aid Society. A 1997 evaluation by a Ministry of Human Resources consultant indicated that the GVVSS lacked the necessary organizational capacity to operate the SMH, and recommended that it either develop its capacity or allow another agency to operate the facility. In the face of strong community pressure to become more accountable by opening its membership beyond the existing board, the GVVSS refused.

Relations between the board and the SMH manager continued to deteriorate. When the GVVSS indicated its intention to eliminate the SMH manager position, the Ministry of Human Resources (the sole funding agency for SMH) intervened. In a letter to the editor of the local daily newspaper, GVVSS directors cited ministry interference as their main reason for giving up responsibility for the SMH.

The Victoria Cool Aid Society, a relatively large agency, had the necessary infrastructure to operate the SMH and to provide appropriate support systems

for the SMH manager. With the move to Cool Aid, the manager position was given a larger and more clearly defined scope for decision making.

With the move to Cool Aid, the SMH moved from being a program of a women's organization to being a program within a relatively generic social services agency. Whereas the GVVSS is concerned with feminist principles and is focussed on providing services to women, Cool Aid operates according to more encompassing social service

principles and, in its other programs, provides services which are not gender specific. The implications of this difference in organizational orientation for the operation of SMH are unknown. It may be that the development of operating standards and a policy and procedures manual will be a means for ensuring that the SMH will operate in the context of gender analysis and a focus on service to women.

CLIENT PROFILE

Background

The Sandy Merriman House serves an average of 470 women per year. The average length of stay is eight days. The average number of bed nights used per year is 3,939.

In 1998, the SMH Drop-In program served 1,090 women, including 777 women not using the shelter.

The vast majority of SMH clients (about 85 per cent) are women aged 19 to 45. Many are homeless and dealing with serious and persistent mental illness. Many work in the sex trade. The most frequently documented barriers faced by SMH clients are poverty, mental health issues, addictions, disabilities, histories of abuse, lack of education and lack of work experience.

The mix of clients has remained fairly constant since the SMH opened. However, the numbers of women using the SMH have increased. An April 1998 evaluation of the Drop-In centre by the Ministry of Human Resources showed a 158 per cent increase in use over the previous year.

Client Stories

The following client stories use pseudonyms and generalized details to ensure anonymity.

Tina

Tina came to the SMH as a 26 year old with multiple mental illnesses, addictions to cocaine and alcohol, problems with prescription drug misuse, and a history of self-mutilation. She was shy and withdrawn.

Her personal successes and empowerment were evident in numerous constructive activities:

- preparing submissions for the Sandy Merriman newsletter;
- assisting with a client satisfaction survey in exchange for an honorarium;

- staying clean from cocaine for seven months and significantly reducing her alcohol consumption;
- bringing forward suggestions for the Sandy Merriman Drop-In, some of which were implemented;
- expressing her thoughts and feelings at an annual general meeting;
- decreasing her self-harming actions by talking about her feelings and arranging hospital stays when necessary; and
- volunteering for Prostitutes Employment, Education and Resource Society (PEERS).

With help from Sandy Merriman staff, Tina secured supported, affordable housing.

Betty

Betty came to the SMH as a 42-year-old living with mental illness, poverty, a criminal record and a lack of education. She had just been released from jail.

Betty frequently volunteered at the Drop-In, and was hired to do cleaning when the maintenance worker was sick. Staff helped her to access supported, affordable housing and to connect with community resources such as the Victoria Street Community Association and Citizen's Counselling. She got involved in volunteering, doing activities such as distributing Christmas hampers to low-income families.

Martha

Martha had an abusive childhood, was abandoned by her mother and was entrenched in the street lifestyle by the age of 14. She came to the SMH with a long history of violent relationships, intravenous cocaine and heroin use, work in the sex trade and legal problems.

Martha frequently used the shelter and the Drop-in services, and came to trust the staff. Before reaching out for help she hit bottom: one day at the Drop-in, under the influence of drugs and feeling suicidal, she ran out of the building into

oncoming traffic. Subsequently, she approached staff asking for support and was assisted in the following areas:

- access to appropriate legal and health care services;
- harm reduction and lifestyle change; and
- access to a detox centre and a recovery house.

Martha became active in 12-step programs, stopped working the streets and learned to care about and for herself. She secured her own home. She participated in a community training program offered by PEERS and went on to obtain a certificate in life skills training. As of January 1999, she was employed by a community organization, in a healthy relationship and attending Narcotics Anonymous.

Alice

A 24-year-old who used SMH services for almost two years, Alice was abused as a child and on the streets since age 10. She had intravenous drug habits, a criminal record and physical health problems. When she first came to Sandy Merriman she was frequently abusive toward staff and other clients. Her temper would explode unexpectedly at any time. Over time, she succeeded in making several positive changes:

- decreased frequency of shelter use;
- started taking responsibility for her actions;
- treatment of others improved;
- reconnected with the street nurse, methadone doctor, PEERS and AIDS Vancouver Island;
- stayed clean for numerous days at a time resulting in working the streets far less;
- started volunteering at the Drop-In and participating in activities there; and
- started attending the PEERS training program.

Sarah

Sarah experienced physical, sexual and emotional abuse since childhood. She also witnessed family members being killed. She left home at an early age and became entrenched in a street-involved lifestyle. An ex-convict and admitted alcoholic, all but one of her children were permanently adopted.

Sarah accessed the SMH Drop-In for about two years. Staff developed a good rapport with her, which enabled them to support her in the following areas:

- connecting with appropriate medical services;
- referral to relevant agencies to support her with alcohol issues;
- emotional support, especially when pregnant; and
- assistance in obtaining a counsellor.

Subsequently, Sarah became a regular participant in Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, remained clean and sober, attended parenting classes and was no longer involved in abusive relationships. In November 1998, her four-month-old baby girl was returned to her.

Others

The following additional client stories were reported by Sandy Merriman House staff in 1997.

Emma left the streets and moved into Banfield House (pregnancy program). She attended Girls Alternative Program (a high school program) and decided to apply to the Long-Term Aid program at Camosun College (a local community college).

Mary stabilized in permanent housing and completed a residential treatment program to deal with her addiction. She explored job/education options and counselling with Camosun College. The first step of her plan was to get her high school equivalency diploma.

Danielle began attending AA meetings and stopped using intravenous drugs. She removed herself from Victoria for a period in order to distance herself from the people and places she associated with using. She gained part-time employment at a motel and is also doing some casual housecleaning work. She returned to Victoria to take on more paid work, and started one-to-one counselling and the Day Intensive Program to deal with her addiction and personal issues.

Amanda entered Pemberton Detox for seven days and from there went to a women's recovery house on the Mainland. She recognized that her successful recovery demanded that she be in a longer-term supportive housing environment which would provide counselling and "clean and sober living

skills." She also realized that she needed to remove herself totally from the activities, places and people who were an integral part of her addiction and had been a part of her lifestyle since her early teens.

MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Permanent, Full-Time Staff

As of January 1999, the SMH had one manager, eight full-time-equivalents (FTEs) of shelter support workers and two FTEs of Drop-In staff (a Drop-In coordinator, and a Drop-In support worker).

The manager is responsible for personnel management, developing operating and program policy in consultation with staff and clients, and overseeing the daily operation of the SMH. Shelter support workers are responsible for daily operation of the shelter, facilitating peer support and providing one-to-one support. The Drop-In coordinator is responsible for organizing daily programming (such as casual workshops and speakers), making referrals to other services, facilitating peer support and providing one-to-one support. The Drop-in support worker assists the Drop-In coordinator. All staff are responsible for ensuring that the SMH is operated as a safe, non-judgmental place for women.

Other Staff

As of January 1999, the SMH had 10 relief (casual) shelter support workers/Drop-In support workers.

Volunteers

As of January 1999, the SMH had 10 volunteers, of which six were active on a regular basis (average of about two hours per week). These volunteers typically worked at the SMH for more than a year.

Volunteer roles include cooking and facilitating arts and crafts activities.

Decision-Making Power and Process

The SMH has operated under two organizations: the Greater Victoria Women's Shelter Society (GVWSS) and the Victoria Cool Aid Society (Cool Aid). The move to Cool Aid resulted in major changes in decision-making power and in

staff—board relations. Under GVWSS the SMH manager had little authority. For example, the manager did not have access to a petty cash account. The board was directly involved in operation of the shelter, and sometimes made key decisions without consulting the manager.

From the beginning, SMH staff have been included in program development and the establishment of policies and procedures. One staff person said: "The manager has never put a policy in place. It's always been a discussion and there's room for flexibility and change."

Board

The Board of the Victoria Cool Aid Society has a typical non-profit agency structure. The executive consists of a chair, vice chair, treasurer and secretary. As of January 1999, there were 14 additional directors. The board is responsible for governance of the organization, while delegating operational matters to the executive director, managers and staff.

All directors are volunteers recruited from the local community, and recruitment activities include newspaper advertising. Cool Aid prides itself on having a board that is diverse and has the necessary qualifications to govern a multi-service non-profit organization with an annual budget exceeding \$5 million (as of 1999-2000).

Integration of Clients Into Management

As of January 1999, the SMH is in the process of forming an advisory committee of clients. Previous client involvement in management was informal and ad hoc. For example, clients gave input to the "barring" policy (which defines what behaviour can cause expulsion from the SMH). Manager Chris Downing recalled how that input affected the policy process: "We met with the women and they gave us harsher barring rules than we would have had otherwise."

Accountability

The SMH is accountable to clients, its funder and the broader community. From the start, both the shelter and the Drop-in have been client-centred and responsive to client priorities, needs and aspirations. Accountability to the Ministry of Human Resources has been achieved through annual evaluations of the Drop-In program (the shelter program has not yet been evaluated). Accountability to the broader community has been achieved through close collaboration with related service providers and agencies, through participation in inter-agency meetings and initiatives (such as the Downtown Group and the Crunch Project), and through the Cool Aid Board.

Innovative Approaches to Management or Administration

As of January 1999, the SMH had begun to develop several innovative mechanisms designed to allow for multi-stakeholder participation. For example, a food committee was formed to empower staff, volunteers and clients to work together in strengthening SMH food services. Similarly, a policy committee was formed to provide an inclusive forum for operational policy development.

FINANCIAL PROFILE

Capital Cost

The capital cost of the SMH was \$1,629,000, including \$444,000 in property acquisition costs.

Annual Operating Cost

The annual operating cost of the SMH is about \$327,000 for the shelter program and \$89,000 for the Drop-In program. The total cost per year is about \$416,000.

Sources of Funding

The construction of the SMH (as part of the Downtown Women's Project) was funded by the Ministry of Social Services; the Ministry of Employment and Investment; and the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour. The development

process was funded by the Secretary of State, Women's Programs; Ministry of Health, Healthy Communities Initiative; Ministry of Attorney General; and the City of Victoria. Funding for research, writing and program development was provided by the Capital Regional District Health Department and the University of Victoria.

The operation of the SMH is funded by the B.C. Ministry of Human Resources (formerly known as the Ministry of Social Services).

Changes in the Budget

The budget for the operation of the SMH has remained stable. The real annual budget has actually shrunk, as it has not been adjusted to reflect inflation and rising operating costs.

OVERALL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

Empowerment of Clients

The SMH operates within a peer support model. Staff strive to be non-judgmental, to offer support in a respectful manner and to provide advice only when it is requested. Executive director Jane Dewing commented: "The peer support element empowers clients more than being done to or done for." Staff comments illustrate how this model empowers clients.

- They're not shamed because of their issues.
- Respect is shown. Instead of freaking out on a woman in front of her peers, she gets called aside.
- Clients help themselves to dinner. It's not over the counter. They are responsible for their own clean up in their rooms and the upstairs hall. "This is your house, you made the mess, you need to clean it up." It gets them territorial. It reminds them of where they're at and what they've lost, such as getting up and making coffee in your own place. If they've been out on the street for such a long time, they don't remember home.
- A lot of women have taken pride in their achievements. When hooked up with services to get into detox or treatment or legal aid, or help with getting disability benefits. One woman's room was a disgusting mess and when she cleaned up she called all the staff.
- We offer some validation and encouragement. For example, when someone's been clean for three weeks and they relapse we say: "Hey, you've done it, you can do it again."

Multi-Dimensional Approach to Meeting Needs

The SMH offers a broad range of services in addition to shelter. The Drop-In program includes:

- one-to-one support;
- referrals to community resources such as housing, food, clothing, free furniture, counselling and advocacy services;
- referrals to self-help and support groups;
- weekly alcohol support group on site;
- discussion groups focussed on life skills issues;
- visits and presentations from relevant community agencies;
- weekly provision of street nurse services on site;
- computer orientation; and
- a daily warm lunch and self-serve snacks.

Volunteer participation provides opportunities for experiential learning and empowerment. The volunteer program includes clients and other women from the community. In addition to cooking and crafts, the volunteers produce and distribute a monthly SMH newsletter which expresses women's voices through poetry, jokes, concerns, issues and experiences. It also contains a calendar of Drop-In activities, community events and services for women. The content and design are directed by Drop-In users and coordinated by a volunteer.

The Drop-In has daytime use that is like a community centre. It serves women who are not necessarily using the shelter, and it is a place where women engage in a variety of positive activities. Executive director Jane Dewing comments on how this approach is a model for other shelter services operated by Cool Aid: "At Streetlink we're trying to move toward that feel... You don't have to feel like 'I'm here because I'm homeless.' You can use the facility to learn skills."

Alternative Beliefs and Norms about Homelessness and Solutions

Whereas some agencies may view homelessness as a problem to be addressed by sheltering and feeding people who would otherwise be on the street, the SMH and Cool Aid view the provision of shelter and food as just one element of the necessary response strategy. Additional elements, such as working with and advocating for clients to access needed community services, are essential. As illustrated in the stories of clients, this holistic and individualized approach creates opportunities for clients to achieve success.

The SMH intends to expand its capacity to work with individual clients to help them move forward. One staff member commented on the frustration of not having sufficient time for one-on-one work: "Sometimes we feel like a band-aid—a bed and a meal." Cool Aid executive director Jane Dewing commented on the limitations of operating an emergency shelter without case management capacity: "You're only warehousing. Homeless people deserve more than warehousing. That's Third World. We're supposed to be civilized."

The SMH provides its services in a fundamentally empowering way, recognizing that the women it serves have typically had negative experiences with institutions and mainstream services. Creating a climate where clients can develop a sense of ownership of the facility is the key to starting to reverse patterns of alienation and marginalization. Creating opportunities for clients to give back to the community through volunteering and exercising their voice opens possibilities for positively experiencing being a participant and for moving beyond the role of "client" or "victim." All aspects of SMH service delivery are designed to foster dignity and enhance self-esteem.

From the beginning, the SMH has been an expression of the belief that homeless women can and should be centrally involved in creating solutions to the problems they face. The facility logo features the phrase: "Built by women, for women." The building itself is a monument to the

principles of mutual aid and self-help. Some of the shelter and Drop-in program staff participated in the construction phase. The fact that staff have experience with living in poverty and being at risk, and the peer support model of service delivery demonstrate that the people who some might label for their problems are capable of creating effective solutions.

SMH staff and management recognize a big part of the solution to homelessness is the creation of affordable housing. Developing non-market housing for women was part of the vision of the Downtown Women's Project. The ongoing difficulty faced by SMH clients in finding suitable accommodation points to the need to create appropriate housing options.

Major Challenges Over the Next Five Years

The SMH faces three main challenges over the next five years: expansion and diversification of funding; development of operating standards and a policies and procedures manual (especially regarding maximum duration of stays); and development of permanent, affordable housing.

Expansion and diversification of funding

In a time of shrinking government commitment to housing, it is urgent for the SMH to diversify its funding sources. Securing operating funds from sources other than the Ministry of Human Resources will likely be necessary in order to realize the original intention of operating the shelter on a 24-hour basis, and to expand capacity for one-to-one case management. Jane Dewing, facing the reality of no longer having sufficient funding to operate Streetlink Shelter on a 24-hour basis, queried whether the policy direction is moving away from the holistic approach which the SMH strives for: "Are people going to go back to shelters being warehouses?" Lobbying, public awareness efforts and policy advocacy are needed to renew government and community commitment to mobilizing the necessary resources for facilities such as the SMH to function effectively.

Development of operating standards and a policies and procedures manual

The SMH started without any written operating standards, policies or procedures. Over the first three years of operation, some policies and procedures have been developed. The challenge over the next three to five years is to create a comprehensive policies and procedures manual, and to develop operating standards so clients can be provided with a consistent high quality of service. These standards will ensure that clients

will be treated equitably with respect to key issues such as maximum duration of stay.

Development of permanent, affordable housing

As noted above, the Downtown Women's Project vision of creating permanent, non-market housing for women has not yet been realized.¹ The SMH and Cool Aid are committed to the long-term goal of creating suitable housing to allow women to be housed rather than just sheltered.

Lookout Emergency Aid Society
(Vancouver, British Columbia)

Prepared by:

Margaret Eberle,
Lookout Emergency Aid Society

DESCRIPTION

The Lookout Emergency Aid Society is a non-profit charitable agency established in 1971. It offers 24 hours/seven days per week service for adult men and women who are destitute and require assistance. The organization provides non-judgmental, non-sectarian services to adult men and women who suffer from a wide variety of problems including mental illness, chronic alcoholism, drug addiction, mental/physical handicaps, chronic health problems, HIV/AIDS, legal issues or those unable to cope. Lookout is the safety net or last resort for adult men and women who cannot meet their basic daily needs, have few housing options, and are homeless or at high risk of being homeless. Most clients are from the Downtown Eastside and are referred from community and government services or simply walk in from the street. The Society operates a number of services from numerous sites in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver as follows.

- The 365-day-per-year minimal barrier Emergency Centre with 42 emergency shelter beds provides temporary accommodation, food and support to those without housing who have no options. The Emergency Centre provides accommodation free of charge to its clients.
- The 39-bed supervised Tenancy Program at 346 Alexander provides transitional housing (up to two years) for those having few, if any, housing alternatives, unable to meet their own basic needs, and not able or willing to access communal living options. Accommodation is for those men and women with severe and chronic mental illness not requiring care, but who need a high level of support, direction and assistance to enable them to work toward greater stability and independence. Services include assisting people to take their own medications, aid in money management, addressing lifestyle issues and participation in the activity program. Once gaining stability and some life skills, tenants are encouraged to move into more independent housing.
- The Jeffrey Ross and Jim Green residences offer 103 units of permanent independent housing. All Ross tenants are low-income, long-term residents of the Downtown Eastside and all have some form of disability, primarily mental illness. The Green Residence provides permanent housing for local men and women with a history of chronic homelessness. Support staff are available. One worker is on shift seven days per week specifically to meet the needs of people with HIV or at high risk of HIV. An emergency suite at the Green Residence intended to provide temporary shelter for women and families in crises is used as overflow accommodation for more independent Lookout Shelter guests or those awaiting specialized treatment.
- Lookout has 50 "partnership" units with private sector landlords. It places clients in 35 hotel rooms at the Hazelwood Hotel and provides an on-site tenant support worker to help the clients maintain their stability in the community. It also manages Jackson House, consisting of three houses with a total of 15 rooms where Lookout also provides its clients with a supported living environment.
- The Living Room Drop-in/Activity Centre offers a range of programs providing support, advocacy and referrals, free clothing, medication and money administration for chronic seriously mentally ill persons, particularly those not involved with the formal mental health system. The Drop-in aims to teach social and life skills to help people improve or maintain their ability to live in the community. The Activity Centre program is offered to the 39 tenants of the supervised Tenancy Program at 346 Alexander, shelter guests and residents of Lookout's other facilities. The purpose is to improve quality of life by doing such activities as swimming, bowling, hiking, camping, the symphony, basketball games, etc.

- The Outreach Program offers intensive off-site, short-term case management and planning services for shelter users who require additional intervention and support to maintain themselves successfully within the community. Staff collaborates with service/treatment providers to improve quality and stability. This includes special support to Hazelwood Hotel and Jackson House residents. There are three outreach workers in the Drop-in to provide the same services to members.
- The Marpole Emergency Shelter has operated in the winter months since 1996 with a total of 50 beds. Located outside the downtown core of Vancouver, the shelter offers the same

services as the downtown shelter to clients from around Vancouver.

By working together with professional health therapists Lookout is able to meet the health needs of its clientele in a non-threatening manner. Treatment services are offered not by Lookout but by service partners, such as professionals at Strathcona Mental Health, Downtown Clinic, and Native Health. Lookout staff, all of whom have basic first aid training, augment and support individual treatment regimes. For example, a nurse consultant provides training and support to Lookout staff to enable them to dispense client medications safely.

PROJECT HISTORY

Lookout was founded in 1971, and incorporated as a non-profit society in 1974. In 1970, staff at Connelly House youth hostel noticed a trend to older homeless men requesting beds. The need was particularly great for those with problems such as alcohol abuse. Age restrictions prevented them from staying at Connelly House, and staff was unable to find other resources for these men. Application was made to the federal government under a youth initiative program (LIP) to establish a three-bed, night-time only shelter in the area known as Skid Row.

The original facility was a room with three beds at the Patricia Hotel. Street patrols assisted by identifying shelterless people. Between 1971 and 1974, the facility moved to another location and more beds were added. The emphasis shifted from shelter to follow-up care, advocacy work, liaising with other agencies and counselling. To deal with other issues, 24-hour service was soon implemented. In 1981, the current 42-bed, purpose-built Emergency Centre was constructed. The number of emergency beds remains at 42 today.

In the mid-1970s, staff recognized another service gap: a lack of specialized permanent housing for "Lookout graduates." These people had no housing options due to hard-to-house behaviours. With more homelessness, emergency stays lengthening and the need to open emergency beds, staff began to move people to surrounding hotel rooms. In partnership with other community agencies, Lookout first used local hotels to provide long-term accommodation with support services. Finally in 1981, with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) assistance, the special purpose facility at 346 Alexander was built providing transitional housing for Lookout graduates in what is called the Tenancy Program.

In 1993, Lookout's first independent permanent housing facility, the Jeffrey Ross Residence opened to fill the gap in providing housing for the chronically mentally ill who had difficulty finding other permanent housing, and who could live independently. This was followed in 1996 by the Jim Green Residence, providing permanent housing for people with a history of chronic homelessness.

In November 1990, Lookout's Outreach Program was implemented. It was recognized that the Society needed to follow Lookout graduates into the community and provide necessary support service to enable them to maintain independent housing.

Lookout's resources are straining to meet increased needs in the last five years. The situation in the Downtown Eastside is worsening and the Society is struggling along with other service providers in the area. In 1992, Lookout began keeping turnaway statistics to measure the growing number of people they are unable to help. The Society opposed more emergency shelter beds for a long time, in favour of permanent housing. This was until seven years ago. Now Lookout is spearheading a proposal for another shelter located outside the urban core of Vancouver.

Since its inception as an emergency shelter for older adults, Lookout has continuously evolved to meet the needs of its clients. That emergency beds are only a band-aid solution to homelessness was recognized early on. The transitional and permanent housing initiatives and outreach services operated by Lookout are viewed as major reasons for the Society's success in improving clients' quality of life.

CLIENT PROFILE

Most people who seek emergency shelter have difficulty maintaining housing as a result of substance abuse, mental illness and a combination of challenges. In the year ended March 31, 1998 the Emergency Centre provided 15,224 bed nights for 2,502 individuals. The average length of stay is six days, and most shelter clients are men. Lookout emergency shelter now maintains a 99 per cent occupancy rate and, in fact, turned away over 1,400 individuals last year. The Marpole Shelter provided 7,474 bed nights for 740 individuals over the winter months.

The major reasons for referral to the shelter are listed below.

Reasons for Referral to Shelter	Percent of Clients
Out of funds	71
Substance abuse	42
Transient	35
Mental health	31
Emotional support	28
Medical needs	25

In the residential program, there are a total of 140 tenants living in 138 units, mostly males between the ages of 35 and 64 years. These units achieve 100 per cent occupancy. In 1998, there were over 1,000 names on the Society's waiting list for available units. Unfortunately, most applicants will not obtain a unit due to the infrequent turnover and length of stay of most tenants.

Membership in the Drop-in stood at 1,038 persons in 1998, of which 83 per cent were men. (Membership is the mechanism the Society uses to exclude non-mentally ill persons from using the Drop-in). In 1998, the average number of visits per month was 2,883. The Outreach program has 137 members and assists an average of 65 members per month.

Housing Statistics	All Residential Units
Number of apts/rooms	138
Number of tenants	140
Men	73%
Women	24%
Couples	3%
Age 19-34	13%
35-64	81%
65+	6%
Occupancy rate	100%
Wait list	1 000+

There have been a number of changes in Lookout's shelter and other clientele over the last five years.

- Today, the shelter experiences virtually 100 per cent occupancy, compared to 91 per cent in 1992-93.
- The number of people classified as shelter "turnaways" has increased from 864 in 1992-93 to 1,241 today.
- The number and proportion of clients with chronic medical needs, including HIV/AIDS, has increased.
- The number of clients termed "time intensive," who have needs which require staff to spend a significant amount of time with them, has increased.
- Substance abuse issues have increased.
- The shelter accommodates more clients for whom it cannot collect a per diem rate from the Ministry of Human Resources because they are not considered by the ministry to be eligible (up 26 per cent from 1994-95).

- In general, clients are more likely to be persons with mental illness, their age has dropped, more individuals have multiple diagnoses and the average length of stay is increasing.

MANAGEMENT PROFILE

A board of directors and an executive director manage Lookout. Four managers are responsible for emergency services, residential services, drop-in and building services. The aim is to maintain Lookout as a small organization, so each staff person and manager is involved with clients on a one-to-one basis.

The Lookout Emergency Aid Society was a relatively small organization until the early 1990s. Beginning in 1990, Lookout began to grow with the addition of several programs and services including the Drop-in, Activity Centre program, Outreach Program, Ross Residence and Green Residence. To reassess the management needs of the Society in light of the new programs and services and larger size, a re-organization study was undertaken in 1994. Its recommendations were largely implemented, and resulted in one more management position, the residential manager. At present, there are 41 full-time staff, 18 part-time staff and 59 casual staff members, all unionized.

Lookout relies on approximately 110 volunteers who assist staff with a variety of activities, for example, office assistance, janitorial work and daily activities. The Drop-in Centre is partially managed by volunteers. Most volunteers are individuals who have been assisted by Lookout in some way, as well as family members of Lookout clients, professionals and students.

The Society is governed by its small working Board of Directors consisting of nine positions, eight of which are currently filled. Several board

positions are meant to provide Lookout with expertise in key areas such as law, finance and property management. In addition, several positions represent the Downtown Eastside community, for example, mental health agencies. The Board is active in policy making and is responsible for overseeing the operations of the Society.

Lookout experimented with including clients on the Board of Directors for a period of three years. However, this strategy did not work well from the client's perspective and was discontinued. Instead, an advisory committee was initiated but without much success due to a lack of participants. Lookout is still seeking client input into its overall operations. Each building has its own member or tenant committee and these are active and working well.

Lookout is accountable to its clients first and foremost. This attitude has strained relations with founders from time to time, but is viewed as essential to Lookout's success.

One of the more innovative initiatives undertaken by the Society was the development of a staff code of ethics. Staff was responsible for developing the code, which took six months to complete. The purpose of the code of ethics is to instill common values in staff members in order to reinforce respect for Lookout's sometimes demanding clients. The process of discussion and dialogue around these issues was viewed as a valuable process in itself.

FINANCIAL PROFILE

The Society's total budget for the year ended March 1998 was approximately \$4 million to operate all programs and facilities. Major sources of revenue are the Greater Vancouver Mental Health Services Society (GVMHSS), the British Columbia Housing Management Commission (BCHMC), the Ministry of Social Services/Human Resources (MSS/MHR) and self-paying clients through rent payments. Other sources of revenue include other income (rent, interest, administrative fees and miscellaneous), the Vancouver-Richmond Health Board and CMHC. A total of \$41,000 was obtained from donations in fiscal 1998, mainly from private individuals. Capital costs for the Society's three buildings were financed through various CMHC and BCHMC social housing programs.

Specific programs are funded in the following manner.

Emergency shelter

Lookout obtains a per diem rate for room and board costs from the Ministry of Human Resources (MHR) for each MHR benefit eligible person, and a block grant from the GVMHSS for program costs.

Residences

Tenants pay rent set at the shelter component of welfare, and the remaining costs are subsidized by either CMHC or BCHMC through social housing programs.

Outreach

The GVMHSS and three outreach workers are funded by the Vancouver-Richmond Health Board from the HIV/AIDS strategy.

Drop-in

The GVMHSS and two outreach workers are paid by the Vancouver-Richmond Health Board from the HIV/AIDS strategy.

Lookout undertakes a number of fund-raising activities although it does not possess a team of

Statement of Operations For the year ended March 31, 1998

Revenue	
GVMHSS grant	\$1,929,401
BCHMC grant	827,460
Ministry of Social Services/ Human Resources	588,136
Self-paying clients	536,597
Other income	273,914
Vancouver-Richmond Health Board	143,302
CMHC grant	75,503
Donations	41,701
Amortization of deferred revenue	9,890
Total	\$4,425,904
Expenses	
Accommodation supplement	\$16,341
Amortization	165,369
Client enhancements	40,960
Employee benefits - administration	18,229
Employee benefits - direct services	293,741
Food	177,720
Goods and Services Tax	17,866
Hudson Street shelter	-
Insurance	10,989
Interest and bank charges	4,237
Interest on long-term debt	827,710
Licences, fees and dues	5,261
Nursing constancy	4,326
Office and general	35,761
Professional fees	98,372
Property taxes	57,088
Renovations and repairs	102,774
Rent	83,864
Salaries - administration	76,022
Salaries - direct services	1,759,912
Staff training	7,011
Supplies	68,370
Telephone	23,378
Transportation and travel	13,369
Utilities	106,105
Total	\$4,014,775
Net revenue over expenses	\$411,129

Source : Lookout Emergency Aid Society, Financial Statements, March 31, 1998, Jones, Richards and Company

volunteer or staff fund raisers. Fund-raising activities include casinos, social events, public campaigns (churches, service groups, some businesses) and donations in kind (e.g., blanket drives every winter). The Society is constantly searching for funding for particular needs and often makes grant requests or develops proposals for additional funding.

Partnerships have been and are an essential component of Lookout's strategy for meeting clientele needs. Over the years, Lookout has worked with a variety of groups/agencies/funders/governments to this end. Lookout's current partnership with a private business, the Hazelwood Hotel, is an illustration. The hotel allocates 35 units for Lookout clients at a reduced rent (equivalent to the shelter component of welfare) and, in return, is guaranteed full occupancy. Other current examples are Lookout's role in the Shelter Working Group which is proposing to develop a new shelter in Vancouver, and the pilot regional cold/wet weather strategy addressing the shelterless throughout the Lower Mainland.

Funding is a major issue for Lookout. While staff members have been successful in getting new program funding, core funding for day-to-day costs such as administration, janitorial services and maintenance has not kept up. For example, operating costs of the shelter have been increasing due to many factors, including inflation, greater numbers of people, clientele with changing needs and an ageing building. The need for maintenance, janitorial services, food and medical supplies has increased, but core funding has not. Except for the residential manager, staffing levels have remained static in core programs for years.

OVERALL PHILOSOPHY OR APPROACH

Lookout's expertise is in knowing its clientele, familiarity with various resources and a keen awareness of a particular individual's challenges and needs. Its strength as individual workers and as an organization is its flexibility, tolerance and responsiveness to service needs and gaps.

The following are some of the key features of Lookout's philosophy and approach which can be summed up as client-centred:

- mandated to respond to whatever needs exist on the streets;
- flexible service;
- innovative action where service gaps exist;
- collaborate with any suitable player in service delivery;
- build rapport/trust with service recipients;
- foster independence;
- non-judgmental;
- non-sectarian;
- non-medical;
- non-government;
- easily accessible; and
- purpose-built facility.

One major challenge facing Lookout in the next five years is development of a new shelter to meet Vancouver's growing needs. In 1996, Lookout spearheaded the creation of the Shelter Working Group (consisting of a number of service providers in the area) which has prepared a proposal for a

new shelter. While there is general agreement among various levels of government and community agencies on the need for such a shelter, there are a variety of challenges yet to be overcome, including funding. One particular hurdle is the City of Vancouver's stipulation that the shelter must develop concurrently with shelter(s) in other Lower Mainland municipalities to prevent concentration of resources in Vancouver.

Another current issue concerns pressure to adopt more of a medical model at Lookout, imposed as a result of licensing changes. This would involve, for example, having a nurse on staff. Staff found that Lookout's mentally ill clientele don't do well in traditional health care settings, for many reasons. Paramount is the mental health team's power to institutionalize. Lookout's role (and strength) as friends and advocates to their clients would be challenged if, for example, having a nurse on staff would force them to deal with non-medication-compliant clients differently. The service mandate of the organization could also be affected by this change.

There is a fear that referrals to Lookout would, increasingly, be for individuals with greater medical problems, and that referring agencies would have higher expectations for health care delivery at Lookout than they are able to provide.

***Community Action Plan:
Reducing Homelessness in Calgary
(Calgary, Alberta)***

Prepared by:

***City of Calgary Community and Social
Development Department***

INTRODUCTION

In May 1998, Calgary's Homeless Initiative Ad Hoc Steering Committee published its Community Action Plan: Reducing Homelessness In Calgary. The plan is the culmination of a two-year process of consultation and research, referred to here as the Homeless Initiative Community Action Plan project. This project is remarkable for the breadth of community ownership it fostered for the problem of homelessness and for its commitment to consumer involvement. Homeless and formerly homeless individuals participated actively in the

process, not only as focus group participants and survey respondents but also as writers and researchers (i.e., The Street Speaks), group facilitators and Ad Hoc Steering Committee members.

This paper chronicles the Homeless Initiative Community Action Plan as part of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC's) initiative to document best practices to address homelessness.

PROJECT HISTORY

Impetus

The Homeless Initiative Community Action Plan project grew out of a community forum on homelessness held in January 1996. At that time, Calgarians were beginning to recognize the severity of the city's homeless problem. The supply of affordable housing was becoming increasingly limited as newcomers continued to pour into the city in search of work. Emergency shelters were overflowing and, although the province was willing to fund additional shelter beds in the short term, both the province and the municipality recognized that a longer-term solution would be required (i.e., to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place). Working together, officials from the City of Calgary and the Province of Alberta organized a forum on homelessness gathering together some 250 individuals representing church groups, homeless persons, local and provincial governments, labour organizations, front-line staff from shelter agencies and other groups concerned with homelessness.

Approximately 50 of the forum attendees were homeless or formerly homeless individuals. This group became known as the "consumer group" and would later develop into the Street Speaks Committee. Several other small working groups developed out of the forum and, in the weeks that followed, began to explore issues surrounding homelessness and poverty. There was no shortage of ideas coming out of the working groups but enthusiasm soon began to wane because there was nowhere to take these ideas. There was no central voice. Working groups called for a better coordination of effort.

Outcomes

The Homeless Initiative Community Action Plan could serve as a model of how to elicit community ownership of the problem of homelessness. The

initiative succeeded in bringing together most, if not all, players involved in homelessness in Calgary. Over 200 consumers were given the opportunity to voice concerns and participate in the project. The process brought service providers closer together, saw municipal and provincial bureaucracies working side by side and involved business, the faith community and citizens at large as part of the solution. Many new and beneficial initiatives were developed during the course of the project by individuals or agencies taking part. These included:

- the Salvation Army's The House;
- Canada Lands Corporation's grant of B Block, Building B4 (i.e., Currie Barracks) to house up to 60 working homeless people;
- the Choose group's opening of four houses for persons with mental health difficulties;
- the opening of Mayland Heights Emergency Shelter for 125 persons;
- City Links' development project to employ homeless people;
- Street Speaks Committee's collaboration with Truck Gallery on a window display and video of homeless persons voicing concerns and solutions to homelessness; and
- Alberta Family and Social Services new on-site outreach project.

Lessons

Asked to comment on the project in an interview, Ad Hoc Steering Committee Co-Chair Alderman Bob Hawkesworth said that political linkages had been important to the success of the initiative. Having municipal and provincial elected officials as co-chairs facilitated the working together of the two bureaucracies on the project team, in particular, and raised the profile of the initiative in general. He recommended that any others contemplating a similar consultation process have a political champion or two. Alderman Hawkesworth also spoke about the pace of the project. He felt it

would have been beneficial to move faster but that a slower pace may have been a necessary price of fostering wide ownership of the problem of homelessness. While very positive about the Community Action Plan, Alderman Hawkesworth noted that the real challenge lay ahead in implementing the plan.

MANAGEMENT PROFILE

The Homeless Initiative Ad Hoc Steering Committee was established in May 1996 in response to the interest and enthusiasm generated by the homeless forum. Co-chaired by Alderman Bob Hawkesworth and MLA Bonnie Laing, committee membership included consumers, service providers, provincial and municipal government departments and organizations, funders, the business community, educators, the faith community and citizens at large.

The Ad Hoc Steering Committee realized that Calgary needed a community-wide action plan to

address the growing problem of homelessness in a comprehensive and holistic manner. The action plan would need input from anyone with a stake in the issue or something to say about it and, in particular, would need to emphasize consumer involvement in identifying concerns and in generating solutions. With this in mind, the Ad Hoc Steering Committee developed terms of reference and a work plan that would facilitate the creation of a community action plan. A project team was then set up to provide technical and administrative support to the working groups and the Ad Hoc Steering Committee.

FINANCIAL PROFILE

The main sources of funding for the project were Alberta Family and Social Services, the City of Calgary Community and Social Development Department, the United Way of Calgary and Area, Alberta Health, and the Calgary Downtown Association. The project budget for 1996 was \$30,000 which did not include staff resources provided by the City of Calgary and Alberta

Family and Social Services. The 1997 budget was \$80,000 which included one staff person—the homeless resources coordinator. An additional \$10,000 was received in 1998 from the United Way for development of the Community Action Plan document.

OVERALL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

The initiative adopted a community development process intended to forge a partnership between individuals who are/have been homeless and decision makers. It would include a two-phase community consultation process involving active participation of members of the Ad Hoc Steering Committee, consumers, stakeholders currently involved in the homeless issue and the larger

Calgary community. Phase 1 would be designed to build on and clarify issues identified through a consumer-controlled survey of individuals who are/have been homeless. The results of the survey would provide the base for further community and consumer input. Phase 2 would seek community-generated solutions to the identified issues and desired outcomes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Street Speaks Survey

The Street Speaks Committee developed out of the homeless forum. A group of consumers who had attended the forum began meeting on a weekly basis. Although their views were often divergent and conflicting, all members agreed that consumers had not previously been given sufficient hearing in addressing the issues of homelessness. Moreover, the psychology of homelessness had not, to the best of their knowledge, ever been explored by the homeless themselves. The group decided to interview 15 homeless individuals about their experience with homelessness. This resulted in The Street Speaks, a survey of homeless persons by individuals who have been homeless. The report identified issues facing homeless persons and proposed some solutions. It became the basis for the design of the Homeless Initiative Community Action Plan's broader consultation process.

Community Consultation Process

From January to May 1997, community consultations were held with some 300 persons including individuals who were, or had been, homeless, those at risk of homelessness, service providers and the general public. Focus groups for vulnerable groups (e.g., women who had been abused) were held in settings (e.g., women's shelters) that insured safety and security for participants so they could participate comfortably and contribute freely to the discussion. All consumers were paid for their participation. A few acted as facilitators for some of the consultation workshops working alongside professional community workers.

A summary of these sessions, Homeless Initiative Ad Hoc Steering Committee Consultation Summary, identified solution themes and priorities. This document served as background material for participants in the next phase of the Homeless Future Search Conference.

Future Search Conference

The Future Search Conference was held in May 1997 with almost 100 participants. These conferences are somewhat different than traditional conferences in format in that the entire system under discussion is involved and the purpose of the discussion is plan development, not just input. In this case, participants included landlords, service agencies and members of the homeless community. People were not participating simply to provide input; they were involved in actually creating plans and providing direction. At the end of three days, participants had identified strategic initiatives (actions) that would move Calgary closer to an ideal system for addressing the problem of homelessness. The Future Search Conference proceedings are summarized in Homeless Future Search Conference: Summary of Proceedings.

Strategic Initiative Working Groups

Future Search Conference participants reconvened for a half day in late July 1997. Strategic initiative working groups were set up to develop the Community Action Plan. These groups were made up of grass-roots experts (including consumers and front-line staff) who volunteered their time and expertise. Their task was to develop solutions around the strategic areas identified in the Future Search Conference.

Calgary Homeless Study

While a great deal of work had already been done to gather insight into the homeless issue, more quantitative and empirical data were needed to support the project. With funding from Alberta Health, the Ad Hoc Steering Committee commissioned a survey of 250 homeless persons. The Calgary Homeless Study (December 1997) gave new insight into the issue of homelessness. In addition to service usage, the study explored the characteristics of the homeless population and the root causes of homelessness. It also put forth recommendations on improving the system of

services for homeless persons. Study results showed that 3,829 unique individuals used the hostel system and other homeless services over a four-month period and that 45 per cent of hostel users were employed. In response to the latter result, the City of Calgary, Alberta Family and Social Services and the Salvation Army collaborated to open The House—a 21-unit residence for working men—Calgary's first transition house for working homeless persons.

Community Action Plan

Community Action Plan: Reducing Homelessness in Calgary was released in May 1998 after two years of consultation, research and debate. The plan puts forth concrete solutions to end homelessness in Calgary, both temporary and long term. It identifies what needs to be done in the form of five strategic directions.

- Achieve sufficient levels of suitable, adequate, safe, affordable emergency, transitional and permanent housing.
- Promote life stability and sustainable incomes through integrated and coordinated services and policies.
- Support the Aboriginal community in designing a system of services which will assist in the healing process of Aboriginal peoples.

- Engage Calgarians in seeking solutions to homelessness.
- Ensure mechanisms and resources are in place to implement the Action Plan.

The plan then goes on to recommend specific actions to achieve each direction. Actions are presented with many practical and creative suggestions for specific target groups or service areas (e.g., use underutilized/alternative facilities and resources to increase the housing supply; use empty hospitals or renovate closed schools.). The plan also indicates who should do what (e.g., which level of government should change legislation or what the business community might do).

The *Community Action Plan* was very well received. In response, the City of Calgary committed \$1.4 million to affordable housing and the creation of additional emergency and transitional beds. The plan also gave rise to the Calgary Homeless Foundation, a fund-raising body made up of influential Calgarians who have strong voices among the political and financial communities. A communications plan has also been developed to increase public awareness.

Native Women's Transition Centre

(Winnipeg, Manitoba)

***Prepared by:
Cheyenne Chartrand,
Native Women's Transition Centre***

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Native Women's Transition Centre is first and foremost a safe home for Native women and children, which is staffed 24 hours a day. There is accommodation for 21 residents and the maximum length of stay is one year, but varies depending on individual needs. The Centre exists to support women who have been victimized, either in their interpersonal relationships or through systemic neglect, and who are left without the resources to make the lifestyle changes they feel are necessary. The doors are open to these women in transition—women in the process of changing their life situations. The Centre's goals are to replenish client resources and assist women in exploring their situations, to help them work toward healthy alternatives through the provision of shared decision making, common living experience, long-term accommodation, child care, supportive counselling and advocacy services as well as culturally appropriate role models and learning opportunities that promote self-esteem and improve life skills.

The program stands as an affirmation of the strongly held belief that Native women and children have the right to live in a nurturing environment that encourages Native self-awareness. Respect for traditional ways and the deepening of personal identity will always be at the heart of the Centre's philosophy. Since its inception in 1981, the Transition Centre has made every effort to provide tangible services that enable learning, change, growth and, ultimately, empowerment. To achieve these goals, the Centre has embraced the concept of the healing circle as a natural and meaningful evolution of its program and practice. The development of this healing circle will, over time, provide the opportunity for Native women both

in-house and in the community to heal from the effects of life experiences such as violence and victimization, sexual abuse and substance abuse, intervention for women who have lost children to the child welfare system due to unresolved personal issues, educational opportunities to enhance life skills within the community, networking and relationship building opportunities for Native women, and the development of leadership within the Native women's community.

Clients of the Transition Centre set their own goals and are supported in making those life changes. The programs are designed to help them meet these goals and develop their full potential as Aboriginal women. The input of the residents is evident in all levels of the Centre's functioning. There are ex-residents among the full and part-time staff, as well as on the Board of Directors. The Transition Centre also includes a second-stage housing facility, Memengwaa Place. This is designed to be an independent living facility that provides safety to women and their children who have experienced family violence. There, they are provided with on-site support staff and programs that offer empowerment and self-confidence.

Both the first- and second-stage housing facilities (Transition Centre and Memengwaa Place) are funded by the generosity of numerous organizations including Family Dispute Services, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Canadian Women's Foundation, City Social Services, Global Funds for Women, the Thomas Sill Foundation, Manitoba Government Employees All Charities Campaign, the Winnipeg Foundation, the United Way of Winnipeg and many other charitable and community organizations.

FACT SHEET

Native Women's Transition Centre

#1 105 Aikins Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba

#2 116 Robinson Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba
(Memengwaa Place)

Description of project

The Native Women's Transition Centre (NWTC) is a long-term residential facility (four rooms and three suites) that provides care for up to 21 Aboriginal women and children who are struggling to make life changes. Its second-stage housing facility, Memengwaa Place (Home of the Butterflies), is an independent living program for Aboriginal victims of family violence and residents of NWTC wanting to make the transition back into the community. It has seven full suites, an on-site support worker and security features. Memengwaa Place was created to provide a second phase of the Transition Centre's program. It accommodates residents in the process of leaving the Centre but who still require ongoing support and services while they move on to a more independent living arrangement.

Years in operation and impetus

The idea for the Centre started in 1977. The Aboriginal community of Winnipeg began to identify the needs and service gaps for its families, and a search had begun for real alternatives to the street for "women on the skids." The Native Family Life Counselling Program Inc. initiated a committee to consider the concept of a Native Women's Transition Centre. The Native Women's Transition Centre opened its doors July 2, 1981, while its second-stage housing facility accepted its first families December 2, 1994.

Major challenges in the next five years

The greatest challenge will be to meet the demand that currently exceeds the services and resources

of the Centre. While the waiting list of Aboriginal women needing the services of the Centre grows continuously, funds to expand are not available.

Sources of funding

Includes Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Canadian Women's Foundation, City Social Services (per diems), Family Dispute Services, Global Funds For Women, the United Way of Winnipeg, Winnipeg Child and Family Services (per diems) and the Winnipeg Foundation (special projects).

Clientele

Women 18 to 35 on average. (All women who need the services offered are welcome.) Most are single mothers who have children at risk of being in care, or who are in care already with Child and Family Services. Abuse, addictions and a lack of positive parenting skills are the central issues that bring them.

Innovative features

The staff is all Aboriginal women, a culturally appropriate program design, a healing room built to resemble a teepee and the organizational structure (butterfly shaped).

Contact

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PROJECT HISTORY

The Native Women's Transition Centre was started by a group of people who worked out of the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg. When the project was first initiated, the goal was to provide long-term residential services for women who required support because of the issues they were facing, such as involvement with Child and Family Services, inadequate housing, family violence or abuse and addiction. A group was begun called the Native Family Counselling Services. Together with the Friendship Centre and community members, a committee was formed to help bring the concept of a transition centre into reality.

With little financial resources, the project was begun in Winnipeg's inner city. Agencies, such as the United Church of Canada and the Mennonite Central Committee, offered support (e.g., the use of a building and staff). Canada Employment, at that time, had grants to create employment opportunities. All these resources were put together to offer 24-hour-a-day peer support and residential services that were not crisis oriented, to Aboriginal women and their children.

When this project was first begun, there was recognition by the federal and provincial governments that social programs needed support and that communities had to take ownership of their families. Social programs were crucial to healing individuals and families. There were too many people being lost to street life, homelessness, poverty and prostitution. Aboriginal people were just beginning to come back to their roots and their heritage, as illustrated by organizations such as the Friendship Centre. Reclaiming what was lost was at the heart of a political and social awakening.

So, with little money, few employees, a lot of hope and a community behind them, the women who created the Native Women's Transition Centre

had begun the journey. The Centre's development helped lead other Aboriginal women to a place where they could receive the support, the caring and the understanding they needed in order to survive and grow. Along the way, the Centre overcame the doubts and the lack of funding. When it was obvious that they were meeting their goals and providing an invaluable service, the funding stabilized and the Transition Centre found a home.

One of the largest obstacles to overcome was the relationship with other social service agencies. Child welfare was a major stressor in the lives of Transition Centre families and with little or no advocacy, families were left to deal with their issues and problems on their own. So, the Centre became a strong advocate on behalf of the residents. Changes to the Transition Centre have resulted because of changes in the community and its needs. For example, families in the community needed more programs to increase self-esteem, eradicate family violence and develop parenting skills. These programs now are run as part of the Centre's services. Support for the Centre has grown over the years through the success of past residents and through its innovative programs and features such as the healing room.

Funding has been a major obstacle and remains one to this day. While the services of the Transition Centre must respond to an ever-increasing demand, and the waiting lists grow longer, funding has not only decreased but the requirements tied to this funding have grown.

The Transition Centre has evolved over the 18 years. To remain client-centred and client focussed, the Centre understood that those clients have to have representation at every level of the organization. The managerial structure reflects this concern with a model based on cooperation, equality and respect.

CLIENT PROFILE

The Centre houses 21 Aboriginal women and children in a communal family setting that resembles a traditional Aboriginal extended family and serves approximately 30 residents annually (excluding children in care). On average, the women at the Transition Centre are between 18 and 35 years, although all women in need of the services offered are welcome. The average age of a child is three and mothers have an average of three to four children. Most are the head of lone-parent households. The length of stay for residents is 12 months in the first-stage facility. Residents are then permitted, if they choose, to move on to second-stage housing at Memengwaa Place. They are welcome to stay until they feel confident with their independent living skills or until their first anniversary of moving into Memengwaa Place.

Many of the Transition Centre residents not only have a personal history of multiple forms of victimization, but also grief and loss, poverty, alcohol/substance abuse and negative coping behaviours. Many have or have had children in the care of child welfare agencies and many more were in those same systems as children. Those clients who have moved on from both programs at the Transition Centre go on to housing and raising their families. Others have found employment with the Transition Centre or other inner-city agencies that help families.

Client Stories

Client story 1

I am a resident at Memengwaa Place, which is the second-stage program at the Native Women's Transition Centre. I have been involved with the Transition Centre since August 1995, and have been at Memengwaa Place for approximately six months.

Before coming here, I was involved in a long-term abusive relationship in which I was abused physically, mentally, spiritually and sexually. The relationship came to an abrupt end when my ex-partner destroyed my home and my belongings, as

well as my children's. I came to the Transition Centre feeling I had no where else to turn, and that I would only stay until I could get set up elsewhere. I didn't acknowledge I was abused and I thought I didn't need help.

I started attending the programs at Native Women's Transition Centre, and the walls I had built around myself slowly started to come down. For the first time, I began to learn about the cycle of violence and how I was involved in it. It was then I made the decision to stop it from continuing on to my children.

After moving to Memengwaa Place, I attended a sexual abuse survivors group that was held twice a week. I found this group very helpful and supportive. Just knowing I wasn't alone made a lot of difference, and I finally understood why I was constantly in and out of abusive relationships. Now I know I can forgive myself and stop letting these men "punish" me.

Because of the ongoing support I have from Memengwaa Place, I am able to live a sober and drug-free lifestyle and provide a safe home for my children. My children know they are safe in their home and that I can finally provide stability for them. In closing, I'd like to say meegwetch for the supports I have received at the Native Women's Transition Centre and Memengwaa Place.

Client story 2

My name is Bernice. I would like to tell you about my experiences with the Native Women's Transition Centre and the second-stage program named Memengwaa Place. First of all, my children were picked up by Child and Family Services (CFS) in 1993. I was trying to fight for my children on my own. Two years later, I realized I was losing the battle and that CFS had plans to take my children as permanent wards. I felt like an empty shell walking around. I felt very troubled and very lost. Then I ran into a worker from the Native Women's Transition Centre and I began

telling her about my situation and how helpless I felt. I told her I was ready to give up the fight for my children and therefore the fight for my life. This worker told me about the Transition Centre and that they could help in getting my children back. It was then with new hope that I checked into the Native Women's Transition Centre with a new desire to fight for my children and for my life.

I found that the NWTC had many programs. I became involved with all their programs and also received one-to-one counselling. In addition, I also began therapy with a psychologist. With all this much-needed support, I began to change into a stronger person.

As a result, I will be getting my children back this summer and now I do not feel so empty. I have learned to live a sober lifestyle and now I realize I no longer need alcohol and drugs. I now understand my past alcohol and drug addiction occurred because of things that happened throughout my life. This understanding process began at the NWTC where I lived for eight months and continued at Memengwaa Place where I have been living since January 1996.

Memengwaa Place also helped and supported me in many different ways. Since living there, I have learned to live independently and have learned new skills to deal with others. I have also learned how to handle conflict situations, which I would have handled negatively at one time. I can communicate more openly with my children and other women at Memengwaa Place. In communicating, I have learned a healthier way to express and manage my anger. In our group, which is held two times a week, we have had a variety of other topics, which I always learn and grow from. We have had an elder come and share traditional teachings like the butterfly and the wolf teaching. Also, we are finishing a 12-week sexual abuse program in our group meetings. We will be celebrating our group process with a potluck feast, honouring each other and a support person. This was the first time I was willing and strong enough to take an honest look at how my

past sexual abuse had hurt me, not only sexually, but also physically, emotionally and spiritually. This program has taught me much about myself.

As a result of these support services, I am very proud and pleased to say that my children will be coming home to live at Memengwaa Place with me and my youngest daughter Samantha. Right now, overnight visits are happening once a week. I will be practising new parenting skills before all my children will be returned home in July.

Another exciting thing happening in my life is the opportunity to get involved with community issues. Before this, I never knew much or even cared about what community meant. My thoughts were to make ends meet from day to day. I didn't bother anyone and I didn't want anyone to bother me. If I didn't like my neighbours, I moved. Now I see I can be a part of my community by getting involved. Right now, we are looking at making our community a safer place to live. We have gone to meet with city councillors and some police officials to ask for support. We hope to get a foot patrol officer by July of this year.

With the help of Native Women's Transition Centre and the continued support at Memengwaa Place, I believe I have truly found myself. I have learned to love and care about myself and my children. I have done so much inner healing through the help I have received from both of these services—I'd like to say meegwetch for the help.

In closing, I would also like to say to other women who are feeling helpless: help is available and there is hope. All you need to do is to be willing, determined and strong enough to ask for help like I did.

Client story 3

In 1996, I felt like a total failure because my children were apprehended by Child and Family Services (CFS) and I had just left a 12-year abusive relationship. During that time, I did not understand or recognize that I was in an abusive relationship. I just figured he was a jerk and that I

deserved what was happening to me. We did not have a telephone, therefore, I was totally isolated from anyone. If I did happen to make or meet a new friend, he would find an excuse for why I shouldn't like them. He would often interrogate my children without my knowledge, about anything I did. My own family was not considered "good enough" either.

As time went by, things only worsened. I began to hate everything. I hated going to work. I hated the fact that he worked whenever he felt like it. I hated to go home. I just hated living in general.

I knew we had major problems, but I did not know what to do or where to go for help. I actually believed I was going crazy. As time went on, I became more depressed and had lost a lot of weight to the point where people who knew me actually thought I was sick or anorexic.

Then on March 31, 1996 the worse thing happened, my children were apprehended. I felt empty. I could not cope with this loss. I turned to alcohol and drugs to numb the pain and hurt. The only time I could be found sober during this period was while I was working or when I had no money. This continued for four months.

Finally, I received a letter from Child and Family Services letting me know my time was almost up. If I didn't do something soon I would lose my children permanently. I had not, to this point, had any contact with Child and Family Services nor had I visited with my children. They (CFS) had to mail court papers to my work. It was during this time that the CFS sent an Outreach/support worker to help me. Although at the time, I didn't think so, I now believe she was a godsend because I needed someone to help me receive services. I needed to begin my healing journey. My healing journey began at Native Alcoholism Council in September 1996, where I was enrolled in a Residential Treatment Program. I then attended a six-week Outreach Program. By Christmas however, I had a relapse.

I realized I needed more help and by January 1997, I went for an additional one-month program at

River House. This was "Women's Group" and it was very intense. This was exactly what I needed. At this point, I came to realize I could not stay sober until I began to do some healing. I needed to find out where all my anger came from. I could not do it on my own. Because I could not trust myself, I then entered River House's halfway house. I was there for one week when I received an unexpected phone call from Verna, a support worker from Native Women's Transition Centre first stage housing. She informed me that they had an opening. I left River House on February 10, 1997 and entered the NWTC on February 17, 1997.

I was full of all kinds of different emotions. I was excited, scared, nervous, anxious and just a bundle of nerves. I felt so alone as my children had now been in care for 11 months. I sure missed them and wanted them back with me.

One of the most difficult things for me to learn was to forgive myself. This sure did not happen overnight. I also needed to learn more about Native culture and to be proud of who I was as a Native woman.

It was through the Native Women's Transition Centre that I continued my journey. I learned more about where my anger came from, through sharing circles, which focussed on topics such as "family of origin," colonization, the cycle of violence and intergenerational issues. This helped me not only in a healing process but also in learning how to forgive myself. The thing that bothered me the most was that my children had witnessed my abusive relationship and were definitely affected by it. This was apparent because they would often, without reason, act out aggressively toward each other. They also would often direct their anger at me and they felt I deserved it. Thinking back to my own childhood experiences, I was able to understand how they were affected.

I don't know where I would be today if it wasn't for my first contact with Mary. She was there to provide me with support even though I was quite reluctant. When I was finally able to ask and accept the help I needed, everything became

easier and things fell into place almost immediately. One thing that amazes me is that everything that happened in my life I now believe happened for a reason. I live with my children at NWTC's second-stage housing (Memengwaa Place) and eventually will be moving on. I can honestly say, now I love myself and I certainly love my children.

We are once again a family. I am not finished my journey, and I realize it will take time, patience and acceptance. I am not afraid. I'm happy and my children are with me. Without their father and my partner I feel free to make my own choices. Life right now isn't always a bowl of cherries, but it sure is sweet.

MANAGEMENT PROFILE

One of the most innovative features of the Transition Centre is its organizational model. It is depicted as a butterfly, with four layers to each wing. On one wing the top layer is the board of directors, then beneath it, the funders, then the Aboriginal community and partner agencies. The other wing illustrates the layers for the executive director, the elders, the staff and volunteers, then the extended family. It is a model of cooperation, equality and respect, rather than one of hierarchy and power.

Board of Directors

There are 11 board members including the chairperson, vice-chair, treasurer and secretary. The Board represents community members, external agency members, staff and ex-residents of the Centre. They are responsible for the governance and management of the Centre. Their five key functions are planning and program governance, policy management, financial management, personnel management and public relations.

Planning begins with an understanding of, and commitment to, the Centre's vision and mission. This involves setting goals for the Centre, and the Board determines which programs and services are appropriate to meet these goals. Policy management involves developing, establishing, implementing and evaluating written policies to provide both the Board and staff with clear authority and guidelines to perform their jobs. The Board is responsible for managing the financial affairs of the Centre. It establishes the budget, approves expenditures and commits to obtaining needed resources. It is also responsible for defining roles and responsibilities for board members, staff and volunteers. Public relations, which involves developing the Centre's image and identity, is another responsibility of the Board, and includes developing and maintaining a positive public image with the community, government, corporations and funding organizations.

Staff

The executive director provides leadership and makes the day-to-day management decisions. She ensures that all administrative duties related to daily operations are carried out and is required to monitor program needs and service delivery. The director is also expected to devise and implement strategies for fund raising, to develop and submit grant applications to alternative funding sources, and is responsible for human resource management, administrative and fiscal management, liaison work and public relations.

A practical skills instructor teaches practical skills such as cooking and budgeting. She also coordinates the Centre's catering services.

Two support workers are responsible for intake and assessment, planning and problem solving with clients to determine achievable, concrete goals. They also advocate on behalf of the residents with Child and Family Services, employment and income assistance agencies, parole or probation services, housing, court systems and other authorities. They facilitate program sessions and provide individual and group counselling.

The Outreach support worker's responsibilities include supporting individuals and families in Memengwaa Place, assessing the needs of community women applying for admission to Memengwaa Place, and developing and maintaining a process to monitor the progress of each resident toward independent living and eventual departure. She also facilitates the community healing circles the Centre runs out of Memengwaa Place.

The after hours support worker is responsible for monitoring resident activities and Centre operations during the evening hours and on weekends.

Office staff include the office manager who is responsible for the finances of the Centre, payroll, requisitions, all the banking and bookkeeping,

deposits and budgets. The receptionist operates the switchboard, provides callers or visitors with information pertaining to admission criteria and provides clerical support.

There are seven part-time staff at the Centre, mostly night staff who ensure the security of the building and the residents' safety during late night hours. They perform general maintenance duties, monitor and log after hour occurrences, and report to the receptionist the next morning.

Special Projects

The Transition Centre often has special projects run and staffed by community members. Past projects include Minoyawin (a program that used a medicine wheel framework to ensure the needs

of the whole person—mental, emotional, physical and spiritual—were addressed), smoking cessation, and children and elder programs. Currently, there are three special projects: the children and elders programs, the compulsive coping behaviours program and a literacy program.

Volunteers

The Centre has provided placements for work experience, high school students and interested community members. Reception has provided clerical experience, while other placements include helping in the playroom with children's activities, participating in fund-raising events or special community activities.

FINANCIAL PROFILE

Capital Costs

The capital cost for the Native Women's Transition Centre is \$2,052,796.

Annual Operating Costs

The annual operating costs for the Native Women's Transition Centre is \$824,803, and for Memengwaa Place it is \$136,121.

Sources of Funding and Innovative Features

Sources of funding for the Transition Centre include Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation,

the Canadian Women's Foundation, City Social Services, Family Dispute Services, Global Funds for Women, Manitoba Government Employees All Charities Campaign, the Thomas Sill Foundation, Winnipeg Child and Family Services, the Winnipeg Foundation and the United Way of Winnipeg.

The Centre's fund-raising activities include a letter campaign for special events and the Native Women's Transition Centre Enterprises Catering Business to support the programs and other operating costs. This business brings in much needed revenue and has become essential in keeping the Centre operating following governmental budget cuts, decreased funding and an ever-expanding clientele.

OVERALL PHILOSOPHY

The program at the Native Women's Transition Centre stands as an affirmation of the strongly held belief that Native women and children have the right to live in a nurturing environment that encourages Native self-awareness. Respect for traditional ways and the deepening of personal identity will always be at the heart of the Centre's philosophy. The Centre operates on the belief that women and children have the right to self-sufficiency, dignity, respect and caring. They also have the right to self-determination and to share in the decisions that affect their daily lives.

The Native Women's Transition Centre is first and foremost a home for Native women and their children. The Centre exists to support women who have been victimized either in their interpersonal relationships or through systemic neglect, and who are left without the resources to make the changes they feel are necessary. Memengwaa Place provides safe, affordable housing in an independent living setting to Aboriginal women and children who have experienced similar abuse. This setting promotes self-sufficiency, sustenance and healing by creating supportive networks in the community.

The goals of the Transition Centre revolve around the needs of the women who come to the Centre. They set the goals they want to achieve, and the

Centre provides the support needed to meet those goals. There are group programs on family violence, parenting and child development, self-esteem and assertiveness training, as well as abuse and addictions sessions. The Centre also has a traditional sharing circle and access to traditional Aboriginal teachers and healers. Individual counselling is provided along with parent education and opportunities to practise parenting skills with a group facilitator and Aboriginal elders. The women are given life skills training, support and advocacy when they need to deal with external agencies, such as courts or the child welfare system. Most recently, they are also provided with literacy training, if it is one of their goals.

There are still many other women who continue to struggle with issues of poverty, family violence, hopelessness and despair. The obstacles and barriers are numerous and need to be torn down if these Aboriginal women also are to be given the opportunity to reach their full potential and to live in a healthy society as mothers raising their children, students in job training or post-secondary education, or as members of the work force. As an agency, the Transition Centre continues to work hard and passionately to strengthen the continuum of services for Aboriginal people and to advocate strongly for social justice and change.

Rossbrook House
(Winnipeg, Manitoba)

Prepared by:
Rossbrook House

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

No child who does not want to be alone should ever have to be.

Rossbrook House, a neighbourhood centre, in Winnipeg's inner city, is a "home away from home" for children and youth. It provides a place of safety that is an alternative to, and diversion from, the streets. At Rossbrook, children and young people meet their needs for social life, recreation, personal development and crisis intervention (e.g., temporary shelter). All who come are welcomed, called by name, and treated with respect and care. By participating in the Rossbrook "family," each child or young person chooses an alternative to the destructive life of the streets.

Two fundamental principles undergird Rossbrook's philosophy: self-help and self-referral. Staff members at both the junior and senior levels, are drawn from the community. Virtually every senior staff member has "grown up" at Rossbrook and

learned leadership skills through this centre. Thus, staff understand and empathize with those they serve, and respond in compassionate and creative ways. The hopes, ideas and dreams of the children and youth shape the programs. As an extended family, Rossbrook House draws its inspiration from those it serves.

Rossbrook House welcomes over 4,000 children, adolescents and young adults annually; one third of these children are under 12. The attendance contacts in 1997 totalled 98,796. The facility, a renovated church, is open every day of the year from 7:30 a.m. to midnight; on weekends and school holidays it operates 24 hours a day. The building houses a kitchen, weight room, pool tables and areas for board games and television. Participants may sleep on the various benches throughout the building. At the close of each evening, staff drive the children home to ensure they have a safe place to stay at night.

Sister Geraldine MacNamara, a lawyer and teacher, founded Rossbrook House in 1976 with a group of inner city youth. The young people had a burning desire for a place of their own, a place where they could go freely whenever they needed to. Sister Gerry, as she was affectionately known, recognized a pressing need to divert these teenagers from the criminal justice system and to provide them with positive alternatives. The City of Winnipeg responded to her advocacy by offering an old, vacant church for use as a drop-in centre for an annual rent of \$1.

Originally, Rossbrook existed on a series of federal and provincial grants, and donations from foundations, service clubs and various individuals. Its major hurdle in its first four years was the lack of sustained core funding. Financial exigencies meant that staff were continually being let go and then rehired when money became available. Rossbrook's doors were kept open during this period only because of the remarkable ingenuity of its executive director, Sister MacNamara, and the generosity and commitment of the staff and volunteers.

Rossbrook faced a second hurdle during its early years: the proposed construction of a bridge, the Sherbrook McGregor Overpass, that would have eliminated Rossbrook and destroyed the inner-city community. Sister MacNamara and a group of concerned individuals banded together to oppose the construction of this overpass. In her executive director's report, 1979, she wrote:

This past year the prospect of the Sherbrook-McGregor overpass brought to Rossbrook the opportunity to offer both service and leadership to the local area. This has been a situation combining all the elements of high tragedy and low farce... Whatever the final outcome, the whole matter has marked a watershed in the personal and collective development of those involved.

Their opposition to the overpass served as the crucial factor in the decision not to build it.

By 1980, Rossbrook had gained credibility and a positive profile that helped to generate future funding. After steadfast advocacy by Sister MacNamara, the Province of Manitoba, the City of Winnipeg and the United Way signed a three-year funding agreement to support Rossbrook. This partnership remains in place to this day. Shortly before her death in 1984, Sister Geraldine MacNamara received the Order of Canada at Rossbrook House. During the nationally televised ceremony, in what would be her last public address, she stated simply and eloquently the passion underlying Rossbrook. "Rossbrook House stands for one very simple principle, just one, nothing else. No child who does not want to be alone should ever have to be."

Even before her death, Rossbrook had begun to expand. It included Elgin House, which began as a temporary residence for young men and later became a multi-purpose resource for Rossbrook, and Meegwech House, a home for teenage girls at risk from 1982-1992. It also served as an umbrella site for three schools: Wi Wabigooni, an elementary school (founded 1981), Eagles' Circle, a junior high (founded 1977), Rising Sun a secondary school (founded 1982). Journeys, an adult education and literacy program began at Rossbrook in 1983.

Rossbrook House continued to grow and respond to the needs of the children and youth. In 1989, Anishnaabe Oway-ishi, a pre-employment and training program was established. A marked increase in the total attendance contacts became apparent between 1984 and 1990. Originally, Rossbrook's target population was youth between the ages of 14 and 22; by the mid-1980s, the number of younger children needing attention expanded dramatically. Moreover, though it had primarily been a male domain, increasing numbers of girls and young women began

attending. Thus, these years witnessed the initiation of programs for younger children and for women. Junior staff were hired to help with the children, and more women staff were hired to run programs directed to women and to advocate for them.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

One of Rossbrook's greatest strengths is its ability to identify early and respond effectively to changing and pressing needs in the community. The intensification of gang activity in the inner city has made a major impact on Rossbrook. Younger children are becoming involved in the violence the gang culture promotes. Recently, young girls are of particular concern. Early intervention is crucial. For this reason Rossbrook has undertaken specific programming for its most vulnerable participants. A distinguishing feature of these programs is the networking with other agencies and the involvement of the community at large in developing and implementing them. The complexity of the gang problem and the issues involved have demanded a concerted and focussed response.

- The Leadership Circle program was developed in partnership with the Rotary Club of Winnipeg and a coalition of youth-serving agencies. Children ages 10 to 12 are at risk of being seconded into gangs. This program gives them the opportunity for volunteer work experience in the service of their community. An honorarium is given at the completion of the participant's hours. The program builds self-esteem, enhances community spirit, and teaches life and employment skills.
- The summer camp organized by a coalition of drop-in centres and funded by the United Way, offers children ages 9 to 12 the opportunity to get away from the pressures of the city and meet new friends.
- Let Youth was begun in the fall of 1998 in partnership with the Indian M tis Friendship Centre, Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs, and Winnipeg Native Alliance. It provides work experience and employment skills for youth ages 15 to 17. This nine-month pilot project, sponsored by the Aboriginal Single Window Initiative gives hope and confidence to young people.
- Keepers of the Circle, sponsored by the National Crime Prevention Initiative, began in December 1998. Over the last six months, Rossbrook has witnessed a critical deterioration in the lives of young girls ages 11 to 14. This program offers them a variety of positive activities and builds on their strengths as individuals and as a group.
- Rossbrook House sponsors three teams in the Youth Basketball Canada program, operated by the Downtown YM-YWCA. Every Saturday approximately 30 young boys and girls play games with other teams throughout the city. This popular program is an excellent diversion from the destructive life of the streets.
- A very important initiative over the past year is the expansion of Rossbrook House. Through a recent capital campaign \$800,000 has been raised to provide much needed space for programs for younger children at risk. The grand opening of the new addition is scheduled for January 20, 1999, Rossbrook's 23rd birthday.

LESSONS

- Children and youth can be trusted. They know best what they need. By letting them guide its direction, Rossbrook has stayed close to its roots and remained faithful to its mission through all its growth and expansion.
- Because of the oppressive, widespread poverty in the area, the children and their families are always vulnerable. Often, an individual or a family will be doing well, and making good choices. Then an unanticipated crisis, difficulty or financial problem arises, and whatever measure of security they have had disappears. It is absolutely critical to Winnipeg's inner city that Rossbrook be there to offer support and sustain hope during such periods of crisis.
- Employment is the most significant factor in providing greater economic security and a sense of self-worth. Rossbrook's leadership programs teach many valuable skills that will help persons find and retain employment.
- The strength of Rossbrook rests in relationships. Children and young people who witness so much violence and poverty in their lives feel safe and cared for in Rossbrook. This empowers them to ask for what they need, and gives them courage to do what needs to be done.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Ninety-five per cent of the children and youth who attend Rossbrook House are Aboriginal. They live in the geographic areas that Statistics Canada has recently identified as having the fourth and fifth lowest median incomes in the country (postal codes R3A and R3B, respectively). Many families lack adequate income for basic necessities, such as proper food and shelter. Moreover, Rossbrook's children typically come from families who have lived in poverty for three or four generations. It is well documented that children born into poverty have poorer health and greater difficulty in attaining an education and finding employment than do children from more affluent and secure homes. They tend to have low self-esteem, and often turn to drugs and alcohol for respite and refuge. Often, their deep hurt translates into anger, and they become involved in illegal and violent activity. These children have limited options for making positive life choices.

Rossbrook is a place where opportunities abound for learning leadership, developing skills and building self-confidence. A recent article in the Winnipeg Free Press, (October 10, 1998) by Treena Khan testifies to this.

Arlene has always loved school. But for three years, school was too dangerous a place to be. From the age of 13 to 15, Arlene avoided school. She hung out with kids in gangs, drank, did drugs, and rode around in stolen cars. But when she left one gang, they assumed she'd joined their rivals. They'd wait for her at school and threaten to beat her up. When she changed schools it wasn't long before they found her again. "I wanted to go, but I couldn't," says the soft spoken teenager, now 17.

Two years ago, she walked into Rossbrook House, and found a second chance. The centre was a cool place to hang out at night, she says, and sometimes she'd be there from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m., playing pool and meeting with friends. "There was nothing to do at home," she shrugs. Arlene started volunteering and filling in when there was an open shift watching the young children.

She also wanted to go back to school, and Rossbrook gave her that chance, too. In September 1997, she joined Eagles' Circle, a junior high school program for students who have trouble with the regular school system. It was a safe place to go.

In March 1998, Arlene was offered a part-time job at Rossbrook, supervising children aged 5 to 11 two evenings a week. And in the summer, she ran the leadership program, taking kids 10 to 14 years old into the community to pick up garbage, cook in the Rossbrook kitchen and do other projects.

This fall, Arlene is back in school in Grade 10, and working two nights a week at Rossbrook. Math is her favourite subject, and she has had perfect attendance so far, she says with pride. "I feel really good about that," she says with a smile. "I feel safer. Rossbrook's been a good influence on me. It keeps me out of trouble."

FUTURE CHALLENGES

- To seek out funds and resources to deal with the escalating violence in the area particularly among the young girls.
- To further develop work experience programs for the younger children ages 10 to 14.
- To offer more preventive programming on weekends.
- To continue networking and creating joint programs with other grass-roots, inner-city agencies.
- To sign another five-year funding agreement with the City of Winnipeg.

MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Board of Directors

Executive: president, vice-presidents (two), secretary, treasurer.

Committees: finance, programming, education and memorial fund, personnel, communications, planning and nominating.

Members: 25.

Staffing

Administration team: co-executive directors, assistant director, program director, junior staff supervisor, women's coordinator.

Senior youth workers: full-time nine, part-time six.

Office staff: office manager, administrative secretary.

Junior staff: part-time eight.

Volunteers

Policy volunteers (board, committees): 34.

Service/other volunteers: 259.

FINANCIAL PROFILE

Financial Profile

Revenue	Core	Project
United Way	\$163,079	
Sub-total	163,079	
Provincial	110,200	\$77,700
Municipal	194,436	
Other-Winnipeg Development Agreement		19,882
Sub-total	304,636	97,582
Service clubs	37,594	
Private	158,897	
Work grants	5,227	
Other income	4,448	
Sub-total	226,166	
Total revenue	\$693,881	\$97,582
Total expenditures	\$721,446	\$97,582
Rossbrook House Expenses 1997		
Staffing	\$592,300	
Premises	29,727	
Administration	26,531	
Total programs	145,853	
Net GST	4,617	
Education fund	20,000	
Total expenses	\$819,028	

Note: The growth of Rossbrook's attending population over the years has been the major factor behind requesting increases from the core funders: the United Way, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg.

Rossbrook recently completed a capital campaign where \$800,000 was raised to add an addition to the building to provide space for the younger children.

StreetCity
(Toronto, Ontario)

Prepared by:
Paul Dowling

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

StreetCity is both the name of a project developed in 1990 in downtown Toronto and a concept now embodied in that project, and a second project located in Toronto's downtown west end called Strachan House.

The StreetCity projects provide permanent housing for more than 130 people who have experienced chronic homelessness. Both projects were built within the shell of existing warehouse-type buildings and are modelled on the rooming house concept.

StreetCity provides an opportunity for chronically homeless people to participate actively in the management of their own homes. Areas of involvement include the design of the community, decision making in day-to-day operations and employment in work at the project.

The original plan for StreetCity was for a temporary solution, until more permanent housing could be developed. Over time, it has become clear that the need for StreetCity continues, both for individuals who stay for the long term and for the continual flow of people on the street for whom this form of housing can be a crucial first step to other forms of housing.

Funding for StreetCity comes from both municipal and provincial governments. The City of Toronto provided city-owned industrial buildings and some start-up funding. The provincial Ministry of Housing provided the capital funds to create housing inside the existing structure. The City, through its per diem funding for emergency hostels, provides ongoing operating funding.

StreetCity is operated by a non-profit housing corporation which has a longstanding commitment to housing as a means of helping people who have experienced chronic homelessness and marginalization to regain some control over their lives. Active participation in decision making and employment are two key tools used to achieve empowerment.

Skilled on-site staff are responsible for security, rent collection, administration and supervision of building maintenance. Their most important role is that of facilitators, working with StreetCity residents to ensure that every resident has the opportunity to participate in the life of the community to the extent of his/her ability.

FACT SHEET

StreetCity

- #1 393 Front Street East, Toronto, Ontario
- #2 805a Wellington Street West, Toronto, Ontario

Description of project

StreetCity is both the name of a project for chronically homeless people and the innovative concept embodied in StreetCity and in a second project on Strachan Avenue. Each building houses approximately 70. In each location, there are additional units for specific uses. In all, there are about 174 people residing in the two buildings.

Both the original StreetCity and the second location, known as Strachan House, are located on peripheral, formerly industrial, lands, close to but separate from existing residential communities. At the same time, both sites are close enough to the city core to be accessible to services.

Years in operation

StreetCity opened early in 1990 at the first location at 393 Front Street and in December 1996 in the second location. Both sites continue in operation at least through the winter of 1998-99. The future of the first location is uncertain, as the province, which owns the land, is planning to sell the land. The second location is certain to continue for at least 13 more years under the terms of a long-term lease with the City of Toronto.

Impetus

StreetCity was developed by the Homes First Society, working very closely with other community organizations, the City of Toronto and homeless people themselves. It was recognized that there were few options available for people experiencing long-term homelessness who were not ready for self-contained housing.

Major obstacles

Major obstacles to the development and support of StreetCity were:

- opposition to the concept based on a fear of "warehousing the poor," substandard housing

and failure to address the systemic causes of homelessness;

- technical obstacles to the innovative housing form, overcome by high-level political commitment requiring flexibility by building officials; and
- significant up-front financial requirements, overcome by relatively low operating costs.

Funding sources

- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Province of Ontario (Capital);
- Homeless Initiatives (Capital), City of Toronto; and
- Hostel Operations (Per Diems, Operations), City of Toronto.

Clientele

The target population for StreetCity is people who have experienced chronic homelessness and who have difficulty in maintaining stable housing. Tenants include roughly equal numbers of men and women over the age of 21. One associated project, Savard's, provides shelter for the most vulnerable women on the street.

Services offered

StreetCity is primarily housing, defined as permanent in that residents who live within the rules of StreetCity are able to stay as long as they choose. Supports are provided by 24-hour-per-day staff, whose primary responsibilities are community development and facilitation of tenant involvement in the community. Community economic development and skills development opportunities are also provided.

Tenants have access to services and facilities to deal with addictions, mental health and physical health needs.

Innovative features

Major areas of innovation include cooperation between different levels of government and community in funding and developing the project, the built form of a village within a warehouse

structure and the management style which involves formerly homeless people in all aspects of the operation of the project.

Major challenges in the next five years

The biggest challenge will be ensuring the continued existence of the first StreetCity location as the owner (the Province of Ontario) pursues the sale of the building and surrounding land. A new location is being sought.

Maintaining the vitality and the innovation of the model over years of operation is also a major challenge.

Contact

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PROJECT HISTORY

The Need

StreetCity was founded in 1989 to respond to a need identified by homeless people in Toronto and organizations working to address their needs. At that time, there were few options available to people experiencing chronic homelessness. Emergency shelters provided a bed for the night but did not afford any sense of stability as the residents were required to take all their belongings and go back to the street each morning.

Permanent housing was often not an option for homeless people who had no furniture, no cash for last month's rent, no history of stable housing and poor skills to maintain successful tenancy. Despite the success that had been achieved in the development of a range of non-profit, cooperative and public housing, many marginalized people were unable to access that social housing or, if they got in, were unable to maintain their tenancy. They didn't fit the structures and expectations of managers and other residents of that housing. As well, many homeless people preferred the community of the street or the hostel to the loneliness and isolation of the rooming house or apartment building.

A group of homeless people calling themselves "the balcony bunch" proposed an alternative form of shelter/housing in which people could enjoy the privacy and stability of permanent housing in a way that would enable them to assume the responsibilities of tenancy in a supportive environment. They called this place "StreetCity"

The Context

Philosophical

In the early 1980s, staff of various agencies serving homeless people in downtown Toronto began meeting and working together to share resources and to better address the needs of the street population of Toronto. Based on the generally accepted notion that homeless people

were, for the most part, people who had been temporarily displaced from their homes by unemployment or other mishap, the group called itself the Single Displaced Persons (SDP) Project. As they worked together to advocate for change in the community, the SDP concluded that whatever life issues or problems people on the street face and whatever factors contribute to their homelessness, they need homes first before they can begin to deal with those issues.

To respond to this need, members of the SDP established a non-profit company called the Homes First Society (Homes First or HFS) to develop permanent housing for homeless people. At the same time the SDP successfully lobbied the Government of Ontario to open up the eligibility for all social housing to include single people. (Prior to 1986, only families with children, seniors and some categories of disabled people were eligible for subsidized housing in Ontario.)

By 1987, the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH), governments everywhere were increasingly receptive to innovative ways to respond to the needs of homeless people. As well, perhaps for the first time, homelessness in North American cities was looked at in the same light as homelessness in the cities of the developing world.

Staff from Homes First, the City of Toronto and other agencies met with delegates from developing nations. They heard about slum dwellers in places like Bangkok who developed highly sophisticated communities with no government support and few material resources.

The Toronto activists saw a lesson in the squatter settlement model that could be drawn on to address the unmet needs of Toronto's street population. In many developing countries, there has been a history of squatter settlements in which people put down roots in whatever space is available and, without significant resources, develop a community. All

that was needed in Toronto was to establish a building envelope within which they could define their housing needs and establish a community.

This concept of community came together with the vision of the Balcony Bunch to become StreetCity.

Political and social context

The idea of StreetCity found a champion in the then Mayor of Toronto, Art Eggleton, who directed all city departments to give full cooperation to Housing Department staff in finding a home for StreetCity. The mayor found a ready ally in the provincial housing minister, Chaviva Hosek, who had been actively supporting a wide range of innovative techniques to increase the supply of affordable housing. One proposed solution was the redevelopment of under-used industrial land near the downtown into a new community—Ataratiri. The plans for Ataratiri were expected to take from three to five years to materialize. In the interim, the City offered a vacant building in the Ataratiri lands as the site for StreetCity.

StreetCity - The Concept

In the years between its formation in 1983 and the IYSH in 1987, Homes First had been successful in developing a number of housing projects for homeless people, using the Non Profit Housing Program. These projects had an innovative management structure that involved homeless people, in partnership with staff and community representatives, in decision making about the operation of the housing. In built form, however, these projects were fairly traditional apartment buildings and many homeless people were still not able to accept the isolation and the responsibility involved in living in self-contained housing.

Building on the model of the squatter community in developing countries, Homes First and its partners proposed a new model. The components of this new model were:

- a physical structure that was open enough to allow the residents to design their own community;

- a location close enough to the city centre to allow residents to maintain contact with the services and facilities that meet their needs;
- a location removed enough from other residential and business uses to allow freedom of activity without conflict between residents and neighbours;
- staff committed to and skilled in the practice of facilitative management (i.e., working with marginalized people to enhance their ability to participate in decision making and day to day activity); and
- homeless people willing to work together to address their own housing needs.

StreetCity - The Building

The building provided by the city for StreetCity had been a post office truck maintenance building, a building with few interior columns that provided a large open space. Up to 50 men began to live in what had been the office space, working together during the day to plan the physical and social design of their new homes.

The men who came to StreetCity decided to mirror a housing form with which they were familiar: the rooming house. Six rooming houses were constructed inside the building, each containing a shared kitchen, bathroom and living room and 12 private bedrooms.

The design of space within StreetCity incorporates a continuum of uses from public to private. On leaving the totally public space of the street outside StreetCity, the visitor enters what is known as Main Street. Built to take advantage of the natural light from a central skylight, Main Street is a public space for all residents, staff and guests of StreetCity. Marginally more private than the street outside, Main Street is open for use by anyone who has a legitimate reason to be at StreetCity. It is here that the town council meets, tours are held and social activities take place.

Off either side of Main Street are the six houses that are the homes of StreetCity residents. Each house includes semi-private space accessible to the residents of that house, their guests and staff

who have business there. This space includes a common room with television, a shared kitchen and the bathroom. Finally, each resident has his or her private room, with a bed and dresser, a chair and a small refrigerator. There is a lock on the door and this place is private to that resident and his or her invited guests. Staff do not have access to the room except on invitation or emergency.

The design of StreetCity also provides for a certain amount of negotiable space—space for which a use is not concretely designed and for which the community can negotiate a use as it sees fit. This space can fit anywhere into the range of public to private space.

This continuum of public to private space reflects the need of people who have experienced homelessness to be able to choose solitude or community as their needs and moods dictate. This is a luxury they don't enjoy on the street or in the shelter system. When the second StreetCity project was developed on Strachan Avenue, many of the same design concepts were continued, including the public-to-private continuum and the concept of negotiable space.

StreetCity - The Community

Socially, the residents and staff of StreetCity designed a community in which residents played a meaningful role in the running of the community. The main forums for decision making became house meetings, town council and the mediation committee. Rules were established which respected the needs of individuals and the community and embodied a high level of tolerance for personal behaviour.

Objectives at the Start of the Project

Since StreetCity was the result of the contributions of a large number of people with different experiences and philosophies, the objectives of the project were varied.

- StreetCity as a process in which, given the opportunity and the support, homeless people

could define and develop a community that met their needs. The end result of this process was to be permanent housing, and the warehouse was an important but temporary step.

- StreetCity as a temporary solution for residents. While StreetCity might remain open for the long term, residents would change as individuals come in off the street, stabilize their lives and move on to other more desirable housing.
- StreetCity as a response to a range of needs defined by the individual resident. StreetCity was to provide marginalized people with a space to live in a reasonably dignified way, while offering them the opportunity to make choices and the support to pursue the option they chose.
- Finally, StreetCity was to provide an opportunity to explore and demonstrate the root causes of homelessness and to establish a model to overcome those root causes.

One experienced staff person describes StreetCity this way.

In a sense StreetCity helps to preserve a relic of the past. In small town life there were often marginalized people like the town drunk who were known by everyone and accepted with a degree of tolerance. People paid a penalty for that role but they did survive and were accepted. With the movement to the big city, that role is gone. StreetCity gives people a chance to be accepted again. Staff at StreetCity listen to people that no one else listens to.

Obstacles Encountered and Factors that Facilitated the Process

The concept of StreetCity was not universally popular, then or now. Opponents of the model were concerned about the symbolism of "warehousing the poor," about developing solutions that were below the standard of housing

available to most people and about the lack of permanence of the housing. The response to these concerns was that StreetCity is permanent for each resident, in the sense that each person is able to stay as long as he or she chooses.

The cost of developing and managing StreetCity was significant, the capital cost of building homes in the truck depot was \$1.5 million and the operating cost was close to \$1,000,000 per year. No government program existed to provide for these costs. Three levels of government all agreed to exercise flexibility to make the resources available. Furthermore, development of this kind of community within a non-residential structure and designing it to be flexible enough to meet the changing needs and demands of the residents required a willingness to be flexible on the part of enforcement officials such as building inspectors, plan examiners and planners.

Changes to the Project Over Time

The first years of StreetCity were difficult for residents who had to adjust to living in a community setting. For some, the stress of the process was too much and they moved on. Gradually, however, a sense of stability was established and the people who stayed developed social structures that worked most of the time.

The population that lives at StreetCity has changed over the years. Initial residents were people who had been on the street for a long time; they were street smart, hard core, aggressive. Reflecting changes in mental health policy, there has been an increase in people with a history of institutional living and less time on the street—more vulnerable people. The conflict between the two groups initially required much staff time. Today, there is less conflict; the presence of people with mental health issues among the street population is now much more prevalent.

The original expectation—that StreetCity would be demolished after three to five years to be replaced by a more permanent form of housing in the new Ataratiri neighbourhood—did not come about as the perception of a housing crisis

diminished and governments were no longer willing to assume costs of the environmental clean-up. The cancellation of plans for Ataratiri meant that the land ownership reverted to the province. As a result of the ongoing uncertainty about the future of StreetCity in its original Front Street east location, Homes First Society, in conjunction with the City of Toronto, began to develop plans for a place to relocate the community. Over time, two plans emerged: one for a second stage of permanent housing to relocate those members of the StreetCity community ready to move on to more permanent and self-contained housing and the second for a new building to replace StreetCity.

The more permanent housing was planned to be located in a building owned by the United Church at 761 Queen Street West in Toronto's west end. The church, as part of its ongoing mission, was working with anti-poverty activists to convert the building to a place to showcase and support community economic development initiatives designed to provide employment for marginalized people. The development would provide facilities for various community businesses, as well as 32 apartments for former StreetCity residents.

When the new provincial government was elected in 1995, plans for the housing were cancelled and the development of the building proceeded without the housing presence. Homes First, instead, targeted a smaller project already under development as a place for StreetCity residents to relocate. This smaller project, the Pleasant Manor, became home for 16 StreetCity residents who wanted to move to a more traditional self-contained housing form. A former lumber warehouse, vacant for a decade, was provided by the City of Toronto, free of charge to Homes First, along with a capital grant of \$500,000 to carry out the environmental clean-up that was needed. The building, which became known as Strachan House, opened for occupancy just before Christmas in 1996. About half the residents of StreetCity moved to Strachan House. As the future of StreetCity continues to be uncertain, the City of Toronto is working with Homes First to locate a new site for the original StreetCity community. Nonetheless, in order to

cover ongoing costs and in response to continued need, Homes First moved new people into the building to fill all vacant units. As well, the building, which had originally only been intended for three to five years of use, needed significant repairs, as it entered its eighth year of continuous operation.

Lessons

Any measure of success or failure is bound to be rooted in the values of the observer. In any program intended to address the needs of chronically homeless or marginalized people, it is essential to determine the values of the people served. If the success of StreetCity is measured in the ability of residents to move onward and upward into some other form of housing, the project may be deemed a failure. While StreetCity staff do not keep records of where people go when they leave StreetCity, one experienced staff person reported that, in her experience, there are few examples of residents moving on to self-contained housing. Many who leave do not go voluntarily but are evicted due to non-payment of rent or behaviour that is too disruptive to the community. Most go to other shelters, to the street, to institutions or back to their families. In some cases, people who have identified a wish to move on to self-contained subsidized housing, change their minds when it becomes available, preferring the community of StreetCity to the solitude of their own place.

To some, the continued existence of StreetCity, and the subsequent development of a second warehouse project at Strachan House, is evidence of failure. A success, to those who subscribe to this school of thought, would occur if a more appropriate long-term housing solution were developed to replace StreetCity. StreetCity is valued only as a place of transition, where a community of homeless people can develop the ideas and the unity to move on to something more appropriate. Similarly, the long tenure of some StreetCity residents (some have been there since the opening) is seen as a failure.

On the other hand, StreetCity is a success as a long-term component of the spectrum of solutions to homelessness. Provided that a range of solutions, including permanent affordable housing, are available, StreetCity serves a number of purposes: a transition place for people who are able to move on to other more permanent forms of housing and for groups of people who are able to develop other housing solutions. Also, it is a permanent shelter solution that meets the needs of many people at a particular point in their evolution and provides a long-term home for individuals who choose not to, or are not able to, move on to more traditional forms of housing.

While StreetCity has not removed the root causes of homelessness, the attention paid to this innovative solution has provided an audience for residents, staff and advocates to speak to a wide range of people about the issues facing people who have experienced homelessness. StreetCity demonstrates the skills of chronically homeless people and their ability to participate in decision making and community development when an appropriate environment is provided.

In the experience of developing community at StreetCity, a high level of tolerance for the behaviour of others has been evidenced. Many people are homeless because they do not fit in very well. This can include issues of violence, hygiene and disruptive behaviour that impact negatively on other people in the community. StreetCity residents and staff have a high level of tolerance for many aspects of behaviour. However, there comes a point where the impact of a person's behaviour on others in the community forces a choice between the needs and rights of the individual and the needs and rights of the community. In these situations, StreetCity has clearly recognized that the needs of the community are paramount.

CLIENT PROFILE

Background

Numbers

The two projects, StreetCity and Strachan House are roughly the same size, StreetCity has 71 rooms and Strachan has 69 rooms. Homes First does not keep reliable statistics on turnover, but it is estimated that about 96 new residents move in each year. Some of the residents stay only a short time, while others have been with StreetCity for years. At Strachan House, about half the residents in October 1998 are people who moved there in December 1996, and a good number of those had been at StreetCity since the opening in 1990.

Gender

Both projects endeavour to maintain an even balance of men and women. There are 36 men and 35 women at StreetCity and 37 men and 32 women at Strachan House. The houses are divided into men's houses and women's houses. Maintaining even numbers is often difficult, as the men on the street are easier to find than the women. When StreetCity first opened, the men were recruited first. The women were, at first, reluctant to come to StreetCity because the project is located in a marginal area and women were concerned for their safety.

The imbalance at Strachan House can be attributed to the fact that there are 11 houses and, therefore, an uneven number of men's and women's houses. Because the Savard's project, which targeted the most marginalized women on the street, is located in the same building as Strachan House, it was decided to have an additional men's house in Strachan House.

At various times in the development of StreetCity and Strachan House, there has been debate about the viability of gender-mixed houses, houses for couples and houses where only women are allowed to be present. To date, none of these options is in place.

Age

Residents of StreetCity range in age from 21 years to 85. There are only a handful of residents who meet the definition of senior citizen. Most fit into the range of 30 to 50 years, with women being slightly younger on average than men. There is a perception that the average age has declined over the last five years.

People under the age of 21 are not permitted to live at StreetCity or Strachan House. This policy has been in force, for the most part, since the beginning of StreetCity. Staff report that, on the few occasions where people between 18 and 21 have been housed, it has not worked well for the young people. The perception is that many of the older residents of StreetCity are hard core street people with little ability or motivation to change and that young people get "sucked in" to that lifestyle and lose any drive or energy they have.

Length of occupancy

Although StreetCity staff have not kept records related to length of stay, it is known that among residents there are people who come and leave after a short time and there are people who have been residents of StreetCity for a very long time, including a few who were there from the beginning. Those who leave after a short time are either people who cannot fit into the social structure of StreetCity or, at the other end of the spectrum, are able to use StreetCity as a place to stabilize their lives and then move on to other forms of housing. As a result, there is a growing core group of people for whom StreetCity is a long-term solution.

Other characteristics

Many StreetCity residents are chronic addicts, with crack cocaine becoming the most prevalent addictive substance, particularly among the younger residents. Many of the older residents continue to use alcohol to excess.

Staff estimated that 50 per cent of residents have significant mental health issues. Of 71 StreetCity

residents, 10 have their medication held by staff, a further 10 behave in a manner which suggests severe mental health problems and 15 to 20 are believed to have serious issues somewhat masked by drugs or alcohol. In addition, there are many who experience some level of depression related to the circumstances of homelessness and isolation.

Client Stories

The following are composites of the stories of a number of people who live, or have lived, at StreetCity. They do not describe specific individuals, but the stories are an accurate depiction of the reality of some StreetCity residents. The names are fictitious.

Karen

It is important not to judge the success of a project, which addresses the needs of homeless people, by whether the person served succeeds, in an absolute sense. For example, there was a woman who came to StreetCity after a long period of homelessness and addiction. Her life included a long history of abuse, resulting in withdrawal and self-denial. During her stay at StreetCity, which lasted several years, she found herself accepted, she was a part of the decision-making process, people listened to her when she spoke and helped her to be heard by others. She found that there were legitimate mechanisms for her to respond to any abuse she experienced from other members of the community. Through the mediation process, she learned to stand up for herself and to say no to abuse. When another resident was said to be too disturbed to be held accountable for her actions, she spoke out vehemently for the woman's "right" to be responsible.

After some time at StreetCity, Karen became involved with another resident. While their relationship was seen by others to be abusive, Karen identified it as the best relationship of her life. When Karen and her friend planned a trip to the East Coast, staff tried to dissuade her. Karen vehemently defended her right to experience the adventure.

Karen's situation can be seen as a failure. She continues to be addicted and lives a hard life on the street. On the other hand, she learned to speak up, to assert herself, to take responsibility for the direction of her life, even though objective observers may see her choices as wrong-headed.

Sometimes, successes need to be seen in relative terms, in comparison to the person's own history and, sometimes, they are only temporary.

Jack

Jack came to StreetCity before it opened in 1990. He had, at one time, been married with children and a good job. He became a heavy drinker and, when his wife left him for another man, he was devastated and descended into drunkenness. He lost his job, his home and any connection to his family.

For years Jack slept outside, huddling for warmth under bridges and in doorways. Jack rarely slept in shelters; they wouldn't let him drink there and sometimes turned him away because he was drunk. Over the years, the weather and the drinking took their toll on Jack's health so, by the time he came to StreetCity, he suffered from liver damage, angina and other life-threatening ailments.

At StreetCity, no one told Jack when and where he could drink; staff even took care of his wine for him, giving it to him as he asked for it, thereby protecting him from exploitation by others and, on occasion, persuading him to go to bed rather than drinking more.

At StreetCity, a local doctor visits regularly. He began to see Jack, establishing a regime of medication that staff kept for him and provided at the appropriate times. With encouragement from staff, Jack began to participate in community meals and, when his health was poor, was able to get meals through the hostel program.

While Jack continues to drink heavily, his health is much improved and he has a strong sense of belonging to the community. Staff and other residents care about him and watch out for him.

On occasions when he has attacks, they call for an ambulance or take him to the hospital themselves.

Jack hasn't turned his life around, improved his lifestyle or, in any traditional sense, succeeded. But, he has a home, he has friends and he is healthier than he has been for years. There is every reason to believe that Jack will live the rest of his life at StreetCity.

MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Staffing

Staff levels and responsibilities

The front-line staff who work in StreetCity and Strachan House are called community housing workers. They are employed by Homes First Society. StreetCity and Strachan House staff are responsible for rent collection, building maintenance, security, crisis intervention, counselling support and referral, and community development.

In each project, at least two staff are available on site 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. To provide full-time coverage at StreetCity and Strachan House, Homes First employs 11 full-time community housing workers at each site. As well, Homes First employs more than 35 part-time relief workers who fill in during the absence of full-time staff. While the relief staff also provide backup at other Homes First sites, they do most of their work at StreetCity, Strachan House and Savard's where 24-hour-a-day coverage is needed.

Homes First does not rely on volunteers to provide staffing at StreetCity and Strachan House. Volunteers are active on the Board of Directors, in fund raising and have, in the past, been used extensively as community representatives on mediation committees.

Day-to-day cleaning and light maintenance are carried out by tenants of StreetCity who are paid an hourly rate.

The relationship between tenants and staff is unique; staff walk a fine line between a professional role and the role of participant in the community. The tenants are people who have been through many "support" systems and have come to distrust "caring professionals." They respond well to staff who care about them at a human level. One staff person said that staff need to be able to care about each resident in a different way, recognizing that each person speaks his/her own language and that all actions are a means of communicating. The

community housing worker needs to be willing to listen to people no one else hears.

One staff person defined the role of the community housing worker at StreetCity as like the "designated driver" at a party. The staff person stands back a bit, not to be judgmental of the actions of others but to maintain a longer-term perspective on things. At the same time, the staff person is not just doing a job like a taxi driver, but is part of the group, committed to, and caring about, the other members of the group.

Role of staff and residents in policy and program

Historically, Homes First operated under the principle that people should be involved in decision making to the extent that the decisions being made affect them. This resulted in a variety of decision-making forums in which staff, residents and concerned community members participated in consensus-based decision making. Over the years, this model has been more or less successful, depending on the circumstances. Where the people involved in decision making have different levels of skill in debate, it is necessary for the persons with greater advantage to support actively the less advantaged people to participate. Facilitating a meaningful decision-making role for people who have been marginalized by poverty and chronic homelessness is referred to at Homes First as "facilitative management." This can only be carried out by people who are skilled in facilitation, have excellent listening skills and are committed to recognizing the power they possess and sharing it with those who have less.

As much as possible, the day-to-day operational decisions at StreetCity are made in town council, with the participation of any residents who choose to come, or in staff meetings. As a unionized workplace, some decisions affecting the conditions of work for employees are governed by a collective bargaining process. The issue of how to ensure appropriate opportunities for front-line staff to

participate in decision making in a unionized workplace is currently being re-examined by the Homes First Board of Directors.

Staff recruitment

Staffing at StreetCity has changed over the years. Since the early days, an effort has always been made to recruit people to work at StreetCity who have life experience that enables them to understand the experience of homeless people. In processes to hire staff, life experience is considered much more important than academic knowledge or formal education.

In keeping with this commitment to staff with life experience, Homes First, at one time, hired a number of residents and former street people to work at StreetCity, either as relief staff or, in a relatively small number of cases, as full-time staff. Ongoing support and training were seen as essential to the successful integration of these workers. Even with this training or, perhaps, because of its inadequacy, there have been difficulties in retaining former residents on staff. In several cases, this was perceived as a difficulty in establishing clear and appropriate boundaries between staff and residents. This issue of boundaries has been an area of contention, with some workers maintaining that it is elitist, while others maintaining that failure to maintain clear distinction between the role of staff and resident can lead to exploitation based on differential power.

Governance Structure

The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of Homes First Society was, from the beginning, structured to operate on the principle of facilitative management. Of the 12 positions on the Board of Directors, one third (or four positions) are reserved for people who are resident in properties managed by the Homes First Society.

The Board of Directors of Homes First Society is elected annually with community members recommended by a nominating committee and tenant board members elected by tenants.

Ensuring a meaningful role for resident board members is an ongoing struggle. Several years ago, the Board made a conscious decision to reduce its role in the day-to-day management of the organization, directing its energies instead to broad direction setting and policy making. For resident directors, it is often the day-to-day issues which impact directly on their lives and which are now defined as being outside the Board's mandate.

The Resource Group

StreetCity, and the related projects Strachan House and Savard's were developed using a model called the Resource Group. The Resource Group is made up of friends and supporters of StreetCity, including representatives of provincial and municipal funders, local politicians, the mayor's office, project staff, development staff, city staff, staff from community agencies working with the homeless population, neighbours and residents.

The Resource Group proved to be instrumental in identifying and removing obstacles. It met at least once a month during the development phase to discuss the progress of the project, to brainstorm solutions to problems, to draw on the resources of participants and to make decisions about the project.

Tenant decision making

The three direct decision-making forums for tenants at StreetCity are house meetings, town council and the mediation process.

House meetings enable the residents of a house to establish the rules and processes that will apply to that house.

Town council meets once every two weeks and is a place where residents and staff can bring issues of general concern to everybody at StreetCity for discussion and decision. An example of the kind of decisions made is the issue of tours. Because of the innovative nature of StreetCity and its worldwide reputation, frequent requests for visits have been made. Requests have come from visitors from abroad, students, academics, politicians, task

forces and bureaucrats. Because of the intrusive nature of these tours, residents of StreetCity have the right to say no and have done so regularly. At one time, there were virtually no tours for more than two years.

Mediation is a place where conflicts between individuals can be worked out. Any member of the community, resident or staff, has the right to take any other person to mediation to make a complaint about that person's behaviour. The mediation committee consists of other residents and people from the outside community who are committed to the principles of StreetCity. The role of staff is to facilitate the process but not to engage in the decision making. Mediation tends

to be reasonable in its administration of justice; members have empathy for residents who make mistakes because they themselves have made mistakes. At the same time, the committee does not let people off without taking responsibility for their behaviour and the consequences of their actions.

Balancing

Determining and balancing the respective governance responsibilities of the Board, the Resource Group, staff, tenants, management and the union is a source of ongoing tension within Homes First.

FINANCIAL PROFILE

Unique Features

Because it was developed within an existing building, which was surplus to the needs of the municipality, the construction was more cost effective than new construction. Wherever possible, StreetCity seeks out donations of goods and services to reduce operating costs.

StreetCity is a model of cooperation among several governments, a grass-roots organization of consumers, social service agencies and neighbours. StreetCity does not try to duplicate existing support services in the community. Instead, it develops linkages and networks involving the existing services.

By providing employment to residents at a fair wage rate, the money is recycled in the local economy (a part of it comes back in rent) and the stability of the community is enhanced.

Operating funding is provided through the hostel operations department of the city, providing per diems equivalent to that available to emergency shelters. Unique to StreetCity is the willingness of the city to permit Homes First to collect rent from tenants as well as receiving hostel per diem payments. This is necessary both to ensure the level of revenue needed to cover the costs of the project and also to provide tenants with a sense of responsibility as tenants of housing.

Fund Raising

Homes First was recently accepted as a member of the United Way of Greater Toronto.

As part of the development of Strachan House, Homes First has attempted to address the needs of a small group of the most marginalized women on the street. The Women's Street Survivors Project, called Savard's, requires intensive staff support, the cost of which is not covered by available government funding. The City of Toronto provided a grant to Homes First to develop charitable fund-raising capacity to support the Savard's project.

Homes First has been a registered charitable corporation since its incorporation. Homes First hired a fund-raising consultant to train key staff and volunteers in the elements of charitable fund raising. To date, a variety of techniques has been tried, with varying degrees of success. These techniques include a yard sale, direct mail, appeals to foundations and a corporate sponsorship.

Using the slogan: "At Remax we believe that everyone deserves a home," a local real estate broker has developed a unique corporate sponsorship technique. Instead of giving a small house warming gift to a new homeowner when they move into their new home, participating agents send a card with a note saying they have made a donation to Savard's on their behalf.

Corporate sponsorship and direct mail have been the most successful initiatives to date.

Financial Profile			
	StreetCity	Strachan House	Total
Capital cost	\$1,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$6,000,000
Annual operating cost	\$990,500	\$882,400	\$1,872,900
Sources of funding			
<i>Capital</i>			
Municipal	Building	Building plus \$500,000	\$500,000+
Provincial	\$1,500,000	\$4,000,000	\$5,500,000
<i>Operating (approximate figures for 1997)</i>			
City hostel services	\$660,000	\$578,000	\$1,238,000
Per diems	(67%)	(65.5%)	(66.1%)
Residents rents	\$223,000	\$270,000	\$493,000
	(22%)	(30.6%)	(26.3%)
Province of Ontario (Ministry of Housing)	\$102,500		\$102,500
	(10.4%)		(5.5%)
City grants		\$12,000	\$12,000
		(1.4%)	(0.6%)
Foundations	\$5,000	\$22,400	\$27,400
	(0.6%)	(2.5%)	(1.5%)

OVERALL PHILOSOPHY OR APPROACH

Empowerment

The commitment to empowerment of tenants is central to the concept of StreetCity. In all the projects with which it is involved, Homes First operates on the belief that people should be involved in decision making to the extent that they are affected by the decision.

The development of StreetCity integrated homeless persons in the design of housing to be built and in the way in which the community would be governed. Residents of StreetCity and Strachan House were given the opportunity for skill development and employment experience in many aspects of the project development. Homeless men and women were involved in the actual construction of both StreetCity and Strachan House. They were trained in basic construction techniques and paid by the contractor to work throughout the building phase. Outreach to recruit tenants for Strachan House involved tenants of StreetCity, both to go to the streets to find people prepared to move in to the new project and to participate in group discussions based on their experience as residents of StreetCity.

In the ongoing management of StreetCity and Strachan House, tenants are actively involved in decision making. All residents are welcome to attend town council to speak their mind on issues that concern them and which deal with the running of the building. Tenants, staff and people from the wider community sit on the mediation committee intent on responding to unacceptable behaviour or disputes in a way that will help the offending party maintain housing.

A variety of employment opportunities have been available in and around StreetCity. The regular day-to-day cleaning and maintenance of the common areas of the building are carried out by tenants under the supervision of staff. All tenants who work in and around StreetCity are paid for their work. Where evaluators or researchers

speak to tenants to gather data, the tenants are compensated for their time.

As well, there have been specific community economic development initiatives at StreetCity. These include a bicycle repair business, a tuck shop, a catering business and a market garden. All these initiatives serve the multiple purposes of providing income, skill development, life skills training and purposeful activity. The success of these initiatives waxes and wanes with the changing interest level of tenants and staff.

StreetCity residents are given the opportunity to develop the skills they need to acquire and maintain long-term housing. With the exception of an initial period in which prospective tenants can stay on an emergency hostel basis, residents are treated as tenants, and are assisted to assume the responsibilities of tenancy. This includes paying rent and living up to the obligations of tenancy.

StreetCity provides an opportunity for people who have been marginalized for long periods to begin to assume greater responsibility for their own lives and to achieve independence. Residents are encouraged to define their own needs and standards rather than being required to fit a particular model of growth and achievement.

For many who experience chronic homelessness, the expectation that they actively pursue changes in their lives can prove to be an obstacle to stable housing. For example, a person with a history of chronic alcoholism may not be ready to make a commitment to sobriety. StreetCity, like other projects of Homes First, provides housing on an unconditional basis. If a person needs housing and is prepared to commit to living by the standards of the community in a way which does not impact negatively on other community members, that person may come to live at StreetCity. If, after stabilizing the housing situation, the person chooses to make other changes in his/her life,

staff will assist to connect with community-based supports and programs. Employment skills development is available within StreetCity, but is not a requirement.

Residents of StreetCity, who choose to move on to greater independence in self-contained accommodation, have the option to move to other Homes First projects, subject to availability. One small project (the Pleasant Manor) houses former StreetCity residents exclusively.

Multi-Dimensional Approach to Meeting Needs

StreetCity is, first and foremost, a housing solution—a place for people who experience chronic homelessness to stabilize their housing. As well, the community includes access to food, a doctor, a health bus staffed by a nurse and volunteer doctor, assistance in accessing social assistance, employment opportunities, skill training and conflict resolution skills. Staff do not provide formal counselling to individuals; their responsibility is to provide support to the entire community. Of course, this often means providing support to individuals in crisis and referring them to more intensive supports. StreetCity has developed a strong network of connections with support agencies in the surrounding community.

In the development of Strachan House a lot of emphasis was put on including a health component which would encourage various medical practitioners to develop a relationship with the building and its residents. This initiative has had some success including regular visits to the site by a dentist, a foot doctor and mental health nurses.

Services Designed to Meet Particular Needs

StreetCity, Strachan House and Savard's are all fully wheelchair accessible. Medical personnel visit the site regularly to provide medical care to residents who are less mobile for any number of reasons.

StreetCity strives to be accessible to as broad a population as possible. When it has been identified that certain populations are underserved, StreetCity has undertaken direct outreach. An example of this is the First Nations community. Although there are many First Nations people on the street in Toronto, there were few in StreetCity. Staff and residents met with Anishnawbe Health, a street-based health centre, focussed on the needs of Native people on the street, to explore the reasons underlying this situation. Staff travelled with the street patrol van, operated by Anishnawbe Health, to make contact with the Native population on the street. Through their nightly runs providing food and blankets and offering support, the street patrol has become aware of where homeless people, particularly First Nations people, can be found. At the same time, Homes First has made concrete efforts to reach out to the Aboriginal community in recruiting staff to work in projects such as StreetCity and Strachan House.

There is a small number of extremely vulnerable women on the street who are not being served by any housing agency, shelter or drop-in facility. The Savard's project, which is physically situated in the Strachan House project, has been very successful in providing stability to 10 of these women.

Challenges to Current Beliefs

The biggest belief challenged by StreetCity is that homeless people are vulnerable people who are incapable of taking care of themselves and need to be taken care of. StreetCity provides opportunities for people to find their voices, to develop their skills and to participate in the management of the community to the extent of their ability. It is a supportive environment, which accepts people's shortcomings without denying their capabilities.

StreetCity challenges the assumption that marginalized people are not aware of their place in the world.

StreetCity is a place where people can participate in the community without having to conform to a narrow definition of normal behaviour or

communication. Staff and other residents strive to understand the meaning in each other's actions and words. It is rare for the community to reject someone for behavioural reasons. Only the most violent or disruptive people are not tolerated.

One major factor in the success of StreetCity is the genuine desire of marginalized people to be part of things again. None of it could work if tenants didn't want it to work. The community cannot impose rules and structures unless the people living at StreetCity are willing to accept and live by those rules.

People have learned that it doesn't get any easier when you move indoors; they need to work with staff and other residents to make sure things don't get out of control.

StreetCity also challenges the belief that homelessness and marginalization are transitional conditions out of which people will emerge with support. StreetCity has demonstrated that, for some people, this marginalized state is a constant condition. For many, the damage done on the street or prior to going on the street is permanent and more mainstream lifestyles are out of reach. For these people, StreetCity provides a place where stability, improved health and personal safety are possible. Moreover, StreetCity is a place where people are supported to take control of their lives and enhance their personal power.

Whatever the outcome for an individual, there are enough severely marginalized people on the streets to fill several StreetCities and to make the existence of StreetCity, as a shelter solution, a constant part of the spectrum of responses to homelessness.

Major Challenges in the Next Five Years

Survival

The major challenge of the next few years continues to be survival. The economic and political environment, both inside the organization and in the wider community, will have a major impact on the future of the StreetCity model. There is, at this time, strong support for the model, both

internally and externally. Homes First Society is undergoing a fundamental re-examination of itself. In doing so, the organization has reaffirmed its commitment to its core business of providing permanent housing to the most marginalized people in the community.

Originally, StreetCity was developed with the understanding that the Front Street East building would be demolished in three to five years as part of a major new housing development to be called Ataratiri. When the provincial government quashed plans for the Ataratiri development in the early 1990s, the future of StreetCity became less clear. Since that time, StreetCity has lived under a constant threat of demolition, continuing from year to year at the discretion of the owner. The site is owned by the Province of Ontario.

In anticipation of the closing of StreetCity, Homes First worked with the City of Toronto and the Ontario Ministry of Housing to develop the new project at Strachan Avenue. With this new project and StreetCity both filled to capacity, it soon became clear that the city needs more than one such facility. Efforts have been made to locate a new site for the original StreetCity but have not yet been successful.

Community rejuvenation

Over time, the new residents have begun to feel a sense of relative stability and ownership. StreetCity staff and residents need to recognize the opportunity for community development and need to work together to develop a structure and establish rules and guidelines that work. The challenge is to encourage the current residents to develop new structures and not be bound by the structures of the past. Boundaries need to be clearly established. Where people are led to believe they have unlimited control of decisions, they can be extremely frustrated on learning that some decisions are constrained by legal barriers or broader organizational policies.

Staff roles

Homes First Society, the non-profit corporation that manages StreetCity, has become a large formal organization over the last few years since

the establishment of StreetCity. This has included the development of organization-wide policies, unionization of the work force and greater sensitivity to the needs and rights of workers.

This formalization of structure has led to stricter boundaries between staff and residents. Some staff have expressed concern about the impact of these boundaries on the relationship between staff and residents, and the need to ensure the interests of residents are protected.

A crucial aspect of the work of staff is to balance the rights and needs of each individual with the rights and needs of the community as a whole. Inevitably, the interests of an individual will come into conflict with the interests of others. The principle of community development demands that, ultimately, the community interest must take precedence over the interests of any individual. The challenge is to ensure that the rights of the individual are respected, that the individual is heard and that, wherever possible, the community strives for both interests to be met.

Replicability/Adaptability by Other Organizations

The StreetCity model could, with the appropriate financial support, be replicated in its entirety in many communities around the world. There are many people who experience chronic homelessness who would benefit greatly from this. At the same time, it is also possible to learn from and adapt parts of the model to:

- provide shelter unconditionally, adopting an approach based on harm reduction and accountability to the community.
- Staff and directors of the Homes First Society provide the following advice to others thinking of replicating the StreetCity model in other communities.
- Get to know the street population first. Find out what they have now (lifestyle, supports, survival mechanisms, community) make sure you have a way to sustain what they have now or to replace it before you take away the little that people have. For example, people talk about the street code; this can be nothing more than fear and intimidation. If you support that culture, you set people up and trap them with potential abusers. On the other hand, if people have come to rely on that code as a means of survival you need to help them to develop an alternative. At StreetCity, there has been a process established to mediate conflicts using a committee of residents and staff. This provides an alternative to violence to resolve disputes.
 - Select staff who are able to accept a wide range of cultures and ways of dealing with the world. Don't select staff who view the world from their own position of privilege and expect all others to conform to a narrow range of ways of being and communicating.
 - Have staff work together on some other project for a time before project opening (outreach, project set-up, training, etc). This will give them a chance to get to know each other, work out their power issues and develop trust.
 - A place like StreetCity needs to be a non-static, continually evolving community that allows new needs and people to be incorporated. New residents shouldn't be required to conform to decisions and structures developed by previous residents and may not work for today's residents. Staff may also become entrenched in familiar ways of doing things
-

and it may be important to rotate them to continue to be innovative and open to change.

- Make sure women residents are there from the beginning, preferably before the men. At StreetCity, the women were recruited some time after the men. By that time, some aspects of the culture and the program were already developed and it took the women some time to become fully integrated into the community.

At Strachan House, women were included from the outset, even as part of the construction crew.

- Provide options for people who are ready to move on, and support people to take up those options when they are ready. At the same time, don't make moving on an expectation.

APPENDIX A: CONTRIBUTORS

The author of this report served as executive director of Homes First Society from March 1993 to September 1998. This was the time frame within which Strachan House was constructed and opened. Much of the information included in this report was learned during that time through day-to-day involvement with StreetCity and Strachan House. This included participating in the struggles and the celebrations of the community, as well as the work involved in keeping the projects operating. As such, it reflects the experience of the author as a champion of the StreetCity concept.

To balance this perspective, and to fill in gaps of history and experience, the following individuals were interviewed. They are all people who are committed to the concept and the reality of StreetCity and were instrumental in its success.

Bill Bosworth, District Manager, the Toronto Housing Company, was the founding executive officer of Homes First Society at the time StreetCity was conceived and developed. StreetCity is built on the foundations of his vision.

Bob Yamashita, Manager, Community Initiatives, City of Toronto Housing Department, has been a steadfast supporter of StreetCity and Strachan House since the beginning. Bob was instrumental

in building the commitment at all levels in the City of Toronto that made it possible and continues to challenge the city and the community to dare to think and act outside the confines of programs and the usual way of doing things.

Robin Masterson and Deena Nelson are community housing workers. Both Deena and Robin worked at StreetCity in the early days, Robin works at Strachan House today, while Deena is back at StreetCity. They are examples of the kind of staff who have made this unique project work over the years. They are calm in the midst of chaos, committed to the principle of empowerment that underlies StreetCity, skilled in dealing with staff and residents in crisis and care deeply about the people for whom StreetCity is home.

Keith McNair, Co-Chair of the Homes First Society Board of Directors, reaffirmed that the Board of Directors recognizes the pivotal role that StreetCity plays in the mission of the Homes First Society and in the overall work of addressing the needs of chronically homeless people.

Without the contributions of these people and many more, neither this report nor StreetCity would be possible.

APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Homes First staff and board members have sometimes jokingly referred to the organization as "Homes First, Jobs Second." This is a recognition that, for many people who have experienced chronic homelessness, the next logical step, after their immediate shelter needs have been met, is to find some productive way to use their time.

Homes First has always tried to provide opportunities for tenants in all of its projects to be employed for pay. Homes First believes that paid employment contributes to overall stability, offers the opportunity to gain skills, enhances self esteem and contributes to economic well-being and empowerment.

In all Homes First projects, tenants are employed in building cleaning and maintenance and in providing building security. In the development of StreetCity and Strachan House a small number of people were employed in the construction. In addition, there have been several initiatives involving community-based businesses. The success of these initiatives at any given time depends, to a great extent, on the level of interest and skill of the staff and tenants involved. This varies from time to time.

The Tuck Shop and Catering

Both StreetCity and Strachan House are located at some distance from shopping. For this reason and to address the needs of more marginalized or ill residents who will not venture far from home, it was identified that a small tuck shop was needed to sell staple food items, including milk and bread. The tuck shop operated for more than eight years, usually staffed by StreetCity residents. There were always tensions related to the giving of credit and minor pilfering.

Over time, a food preparation initiative operated alongside the tuck shop. Food preparation included providing meals for the residents who stay at StreetCity, initially on a hostel basis. Food preparation also included community dinners on special occasions.

For a number of years, StreetCity residents ran a catering business, Grassroots Catering, out of StreetCity. Customers included StreetCity town council, the Homes First Board of Directors and committees, and other community agencies. Most of the time, the menu was limited to sandwiches and vegetable platters; however, on several occasions, when more experienced people were involved, the menu expanded to include salads and hot food items.

The business never made any significant profit, but it did provide employment for a number of StreetCity residents. The catering is not currently operating. All that is needed is staff and residents with the interest.

StreetCity Bikes

At one time there were a number of residents and staff who had an interest and some skills in bicycle repair. StreetCity Bikes was established with the support of City of Toronto staff and operates today as a separate entity. The bicycle shop which sells new and used bikes as well as doing repairs is operated by a community-based economic development organization (the 761 Community Development Corporation). StreetCity Bikes continues to offer employment opportunities for a small number of StreetCity residents.

The Market Garden

Adjacent to Strachan House is a plot of land that has been dedicated by the city for use as a community garden. With a grant from the city for start-up, Strachan House staff and residents have established two types of gardens in the space. There are gardens for members of the community, both those living in Strachan House and those living in the surrounding neighbourhood. Individuals use these gardens to grow food stuff or flowers, depending on their preference. As well, there is a market garden, where Strachan House residents grow produce for sale.

The gardeners meet together over the winter to plan the garden, to select the crops and to strategize about how to turn their produce to profit. In the spring and summer, they work the garden and, in the fall, they harvest and market their produce. The net proceeds after costs are distributed to the participants in proportion to their work in the enterprise.

To date, the strategy has been to grow more profitable crops, such as herbs, rather than vegetables. In addition to the economic benefits of the market garden, gardening provides healthy exercise, and the interaction with neighbours contributes significantly to community acceptance.

The Anglican Social Services Centre/Centre 454

(Ottawa, Ontario)

Prepared by:

The Anglican Social Services Centre/Centre 454

DESCRIPTION

The Anglican Social Services Centre/Centre 454 (Centre 454) is a member of the Community Ministries of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa. Located in the basement of St. Alban's Church near downtown Ottawa, the Centre is a vital part of daily life for those living on the streets, in shelters and in rooming houses, and for the many marginalized people who are just looking for a place where they can feel welcome.

Centre 454 is one of the seven day programs funded by the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) and is open Monday through Friday. The Centre is wheelchair accessible and has an open door policy. All are welcome in the Centre, regardless of age, race, gender, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, ability or economic status, as long as the rules established to provide a safe place for everyone are respected.

Centre 454 provides meaningful social recreational programming and counselling to the clients daily.

Card tournaments, bingos, movies and community meetings allow the clients to interact with others and to develop their social skills. Counselling and referrals are available for a variety of issues: health, HIV/AIDS, addictions, education, housing, employment and numerous other personal matters which may be interfering with the choices available to the client.

Many other services and supplies are offered at Centre 454. These include laundry and shower facilities, hygiene products, a secure mailing address, a mail and message service, access to telephones, résumé and tax preparation, a work program, clothing room, YMCA passes, haircut vouchers, emergency bus tickets and food vouchers.

For a breakdown of services and client numbers, please refer to Appendix A.

HISTORY

The history of the Anglican Social Services Centre dates back to 1954, when the Council for Social Service of the Anglican Diocese, under the guidance of Bishop Reed, sent members of the Church Army to visit Anglican people in the courts and jails in the Ottawa area. Captain Harry Brown headed this part-time ministry until 1957, when Captain Ronald Pullen took over. In 1958, Captain Ron Dicks moved to Ottawa to assume this position.

Over the years, the work being done and the people being served diversified. Due to changes in human rights legislation, any mention of religious affiliation was removed from court documents, and in Ron Dick's opinion, "this proved to be a blessing in disguise because it forced us into other things, contingent things" (interview with Ron Dicks, Crosstalk, September 1978). At this point, the focus shifted to the idea of having a centre as a place to operate from, and a place to serve all people, not just Anglicans. In January 1960, the Council for Social Service of the Anglican Diocese was able to obtain an office in St. George's Church. Over the next 16 years, not only did the Anglican Social Service Centre develop, but it moved three times. After leaving St. George's, the Centre moved to St. Luke's, then to St. John's, where it remained for nine years. In 1976, it moved once again to its present location at St. Alban's Church.

It was here that the Centre became known as Anglican Social Services Centre/Centre 454, named after the street address—454 King Edward Avenue. Through funding from the Anglican Diocese, and "help from representatives from the Detox Centre, Canada Manpower, Lowertown Community Resource Centre, the Social Planning Council and the Ottawa Police Department" (Louise Crosby, *The Citizen*, December 30, 1978, p. 69), a larger and improved Centre was created. With food donations from St. Patrick's College and the parishes, Centre 454 became a non-perishable food distribution centre for the disadvantaged and distressed. Donations of clothing started arriving

and the three staff members and many volunteers began providing clothing and emergency meals to the visitors to the Centre. Counselling was available in the privacy of offices and a safe haven was created for those who simply needed a place to go. Centre 454 had become a multi-service centre.

Over the next few years, through word of mouth and referrals from other institutions and churches, Centre 454 became a busier place, somewhere people would come to get in from the cold, to have a coffee or to talk. The idea of engaging the clients in meaningful social interaction became a part of the Centre's mandate. While they were waiting for food or for counselling, clients could take part in activities such as card games and crafts. To assist the growing number of clients, staff numbers at Centre 454 also increased.

After Ron Dicks left, Reverend Tom Wilson became the coordinator of Centre 454, followed by John Charnell and in 1981, Ken Gibbs stepped in as coordinator. In 1985, he was appointed director of Centre 454. In 1998, Ken Gibbs retired and the Centre welcomed Mary-Martha Hale as its new director.

In 1981, the Regional Services Department made the Centre aware that funding was available for social recreation. Because this was a component of the services the Centre was providing to its clients, it began to receive grants for this purpose.

By 1985, Centre 454 was seeing a greater demand for services relating to issues other than provision of food. The Shepherds of Good Hope had begun providing breakfast and lunch to the marginalized people in the area. By 1986, Centre 454's food program, along with many volunteers, was transferred to the Shepherds of Good Hope. The staff at Centre 454 were now able to focus on other areas that related to the people they were serving. Issues dealing with health, addictions, housing and unemployment were encountered on a daily basis.

Due to the increased numbers of people visiting the Centre and the services they were searching for, more funding was necessary. In the late 1980s, a lot of financial support was generated through the citizens in the community. A housing search grant was received, as was money from the Emergency Assistance Program and, of course, a great deal of support continued to come from the Anglican Diocese and the RMOC. Ken Gibbs personally lobbied the government with respect to the work done for the needy at Centre 454 and, in 1993, the Centre was granted \$10,000. Thanks to all of this support, services and programs were added over the years, such as a health fair, anonymous HIV testing, bus tickets. As well, in 1987, a renovation of the Centre was accomplished with major funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

While the work of Centre 454 was increasing, awareness of the Centre and its cause was also on

the rise. The Centre began promoting its work through newsletters to locally interested people. Other organizations, groups and committees, such as the Brotherhood of Anglican Churchmen and the Day Programs Committee, continue to promote the work of Centre 454. The staff have been able to develop many contacts and affiliations that have helped them pass the word along about the need for a place in the community like Centre 454.

Throughout the history of the Centre's evolution, there have been changes in legislation, in funding and in staffing, but one thing has remained constant: a recognized necessity for Centre 454. While funding has not increased in the last several years, the Centre's staff and its supporters remain hopeful that they will continue to be able to meet the needs of this particular client population.

CLIENT PROFILE

Centre 454 offers its facilities and services wherever possible to anyone in need, whether it be for spiritual, physical, emotional or financial purposes. In a typical day at the Centre, the staff will see people who have experiences with the mental health and correctional systems, people with addiction issues, sex trade workers both male and female, the lonely, the poor and the unemployed, including those with a college or university education. For a sampling of the client profile, please refer to Appendix B. While complete statistics are not yet available for the 1998 year, it appears that the number of visitors to the Centre may again be on the rise, due to the social conditions that exist in the nation's capital.

There is always a success story at Centre 454. Some clients go on to find housing. For example,

after a lengthy wait, one transient individual who is a regular at the Centre, has recently moved into Options Bytown, a non-profit facility that provides supportive housing. Some find employment, others go back to school and some find happiness in personal relationships. (A couple, both of whom have both been frequenting the Centre for years, were married this last summer.) Others simply manage to make it to their next birthday with the help and support provided to them by the caring staff and volunteers of Centre 454. Although many are in a fragile housing environment, are suffering through a loss, have been in jail or are experiencing other social concerns, Centre 454 remains as one of the constants in their lives.

MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Centre 454 is staffed by seven permanent employees and one part-time contract position. The permanent staff are the director, coordinator of the counselling program, coordinator of the social recreation program and four counsellors. The office manager fills the contract position. In addition, placement and summer students help out in the Centre during the year.

The Centre is also fortunate to have the help of many dedicated volunteers. The client volunteers take daily attendance, run the kitchen, do the daily yard work and run necessary errands. The Centre also has an army of volunteers who have come in over the years to provide assistance in the office, do laundry, prepare the clothing room, provide Bible studies and so on. Numerous volunteers give their time at special events such as the Christmas party and the Life Fair, and many others drop in to offer donations throughout the year. Without the help of these volunteers, the Centre would not have achieved the level of success it has reached today.

Decisions regarding the Centre are made at all levels, from the clients themselves all the way up to the Diocese. Depending on the nature of the concern, a decision can be made by the director and her staff. The diocesan structure is provided in Appendix D.

The Centre 454 Program Committee provides leadership in the program area. This group of volunteers is drawn from the service users, parishioners, clergy and the agency director. The chair of the Program Committee and the director of the Centre sit on the Community Ministries Board (CMB) as representatives of the agency. The CMB provides support to the ministries of the Diocese with regards to financial concerns and personnel issues. This is a new structure and is being more fully defined.

FINANCIAL PROFILE

Centre 454 receives its funding through various sources. Most financial support comes from various orders of government, including the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton social services departments and Human Resources Development Canada. The Centre also receives 20 per cent of its budget in a diocesan apportionment grant as well as 17 per cent from parishes, individuals, business and other organizations. Approximately \$338,000 goes toward salaries and staffing expenses and approximately \$112,000 goes toward the operating costs of the Centre per year. Projected expenditures for 1998 are \$458,000. Please refer to Appendix C for a complete breakdown of sources and allocation of funds.

Over the years, financial and other support has come from many different advocates of Centre 454, such as Health Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Canadian Red Cross and Temple Israel Jewish community, to name but a few. The vast army of volunteers has been worth millions of dollars in time, expertise and support while the Centre has been in operation, and without these volunteers, many people and services would have suffered.

Funding has and always will be an issue for Centre 454. In the early years, funding was limited. It reached a peak in the late 1980s due to the lack of other services to the homeless at the time. Funding decreased in the early 1990s due to government budget cuts. At the same time, more drop-in centres were opening and competing for

available moneys. In 1993, the RMOC was lobbied successfully to maintain \$10,000 in funding. In 1994, the RMOC reorganized the day programs and their funding. The seven day programs in the region began a process to raise the funding of the lesser-funded programs up to at least the minimum that the Region had identified. Funding from the RMOC for Centre 454 has not increased since 1994, although the need for the Centre and its services continues to do so.

The Centre 454 community is considering other ways to generate funds. For example, in December, there is a Christmas concert fund raiser, with all proceeds going to Centre 454. Clients and staff alike are working together in an effort to come up with other innovative ways of raising funds for the future.

While the Centre offers numerous benefits to its large number of clients, many needs are still not being met. There is a necessity to expand services but it will be virtually impossible to accomplish this without increased funding.

OVERALL PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

What started out in 1954 as a part-time ministry catering to Anglicans in jail or court has developed over the years into a Centre for vulnerable people. Focussing on a number of issues prevalent in today's society, the Centre is geared to assisting its clients in every way possible.

Centre 454 philosophy affirms the right of all people to be treated with respect. The staff at Centre 454 deem it imperative to listen to clients to gain a better understanding of their needs, and to empower them by involving them in many aspects of the day-to-day operation of the Centre. At Centre 454, participation is possible by requiring that clients serve on the Program Committee, in the Centre as volunteers and as participants in decision making through community meetings. This encourages thought and discussion between all at the Centre, and in turn focusses on the needs and priorities of all we serve.

Centre 454 has endeavoured over the years to provide clients with the services they require, and many different programs have been implemented to meet the ever-changing needs of the client population. For example, in 1997, a visiting elders program was established in an effort to meet the needs of a large number of Aboriginal people frequenting the Centre. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada brings elders from various First Nations from across the country to Ottawa to the Kumik Lodge in an effort to address issues of conflict within the department. Every month, a different elder from the Kumik Lodge comes to Centre 454 to share special skills with our community. Our centre is the only place that is scheduled outside the Kumik for the elders.

A tax clinic, with the help of Revenue Canada, has also been developed due to the increasing demand for assistance with income tax. There have been, and always will be, requests from the clients for additional services, and the staff at Centre 454 will make every effort to acknowledge and provide the services needed.

The Centre would also like to continue to engage our participants in the creation of new programs to meet their needs, and in ensuring that this sense of belonging is shared by them all. The Centre was established to serve the homeless, the needy and the marginalized. It remains one of the primary goals of the Centre to share the decision-making power with the participants themselves.

The Centre will face many challenges over the next few years. Funding, of course, will continue to be a major issue. The Centre's residency at St. Alban's Church is also something that could change due to a change in needs of either the Centre or the Parish. If the Centre were to move, the cost, both in personal terms (to those we serve, the time and energy required for integrating into a new community) and financial (moving, increased rent, renovations, etc.) will be a major concern. With the continued support of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa and the Social Services Department of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, we will be able to meet all potential challenges.

APPENDIX A: SERVICES TO CLIENTS

Services to Clients			
CATEGORY	1997	1996	1995
Counselling Sessions			
Addiction Counselling	341	183	140
Education/Employment	191	75	51
Health/HIV/AIDS	449	179	87
Housing Help	430	250	226
General Counselling	1,479	2,576	3,263
Total Counselling Sessions	2,924	3,263	3,767
Counselling Services			
Accommodation*	0	0	0
Bus Tickets	3,600	3,720	2,956
Cheque Stamping	840	1,302	1,284
Client Needs	14	14	6
Clothing Vouchers*	0	0	0
Financial Aid	113	122	51
Food Vouchers	173	143	116
Haircut Vouchers	232	239	247
Voyageur Vouchers*	7	0	6
Program Attendance			
Arts & Crafts	76	10	107
Baseball Participation	837	872	672
Bingo	2,047	2,461	2,535
Card Tournaments	5,272	6,874	5,667
Income Tax	36	60	101
Movie Attendance	1,968	2,406	2,509
Résumés	38	40	44
Special Events	1,694	1,140	957
"Y" Passes	388	523	290
Centre 454 Attendance			
Males	1,225	2,238	1,090
Females	136	260	164
Children	18	40	42
Natives	92	110	
Blacks	72	52	
Inuit	23	38	
Other	16	54	
Total Individuals	1,379	2,124	2,096
Total Visits	32,259	40,065	35,992
Lowest Daily Attendance	46	51	44
Highest Daily Attendance	241	568	236
Daily Average	98	N.A.	N.A.
* Budget cancelled for 1997			

APPENDIX B: CENTRE 454 CLIENT PROFILE (SAMPLING ONLY)

CENTRE 454 CLIENT PROFILE (SAMPLING ONLY)			
	1997	1996	1995
Individuals	429	540	355
Males	365	488	308
Females	64	52	49
Age Groups			
16-24 (youth)	29	23	25
25-39	205	257	337
40-59	199	236	264
60 +	27	21	13
Marital Status			
Single	382	471	404
Married/Common Law	22	12	10
Family	9	15	46
Education			
Nil	1	2	2
Grade 1 to 8	71	99	48
Grade 9 to 11	161	166	109
Grade 12/13	104	98	45
Post-Secondary/Trade	51	56	25
Disabled	176	146	156
Language of Preference			
English	340	189	271
French	18	29	21
English or French	78	56	62
Other	1	4	2
Income			
GWA	244	314	387
FBA	112	143	156
UIC	2	14	11
Employed	12	16	15
Other Income	23	9	14
No Income	12	12	14
NOTE : Complete data not available for each individual.			

APPENDIX C: 1997 BUDGET

1997 Budget		
1997 Revenues		
Donations/Individuals/Groups	15%	\$71,979
Government/region/federal grants	60%	283,403
Repayments to client aid		620
Other income estate, etc		333
Diocesan apportion grant	17%	81,201
Money transferred from 1996	8%	39,096
		\$476,632
1997 Expenditures		
Personnel Salary		\$264,202
Personnel Payroll Taxes, Levies, Benefits		54,287
Staff Development		2,983
Staff Expenses/Parking/etc.		1,628
Maternity/Temporary/Summer Employment		15,303
Rent/Janitorial/Office/Operation		63,364
PR & Advertisement		1,230
Direct Service & Counselling		13,068
Social Skills		5,063
Sports/Picnic/Recreational/Christmas/Special Oc.		14,722
Capital Expenses		7,114
Diocesan Administration Costs 2% Charge		7,752
		\$450,716
	Revenue	476,632
	Expenditure	450,716
	Carry-Over	\$25,916

APPENDIX D: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Centre 454

Mary-Martha Hale, Director
Lynne Zwitouni, Coordinator of Counselling
Program
David Rayner, Coordinator of Social
Recreation Program

Counselling staff

Rosalie Carley
Andrew Cheam
Natalie Lemoyre
Kimberly MacKenzie
Donna Watters (Contract)

Support staff

Belinda Salmon (Contract)
Desire Bizimana (Contract)

Centre 454 Program Committee

Ms. Rebecca Volk, Chair
Mr. Herb Morrow
Mr. Fred Boyd
Mr. Bruce Lachapelle
Mrs. M. Dumbrille
The Rev. M. J. Flemming

APPENDIX E: RESEARCH SOURCES

Appendices A-D taken from the Centre 454 Report/Annual Open Meeting, April 21, 1998.

Interviews with Ken Gibbs, past director of Centre 454, and Mary-Martha Hale, present director of Centre 454.

Articles:

"Body and Soul Can Get Help From Centre."
(1978). *The Citizen*, Ottawa, Saturday,
December 30, pp. 68-69.

"Church Army Serves All People in Trouble."
(1976). *The Citizen*, Ottawa, Friday,
December 31, p. 31.

Crosstalk, an interview with Ron Dicks, 1978.

The Diocesan News. December 1976.

***La Fédération des organismes sans but
lucratif d'habitation de Montréal
(FOHM)***

(Montréal, Québec)

Prepared by:

Christian Jetté

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Fédération des organismes sans but lucratif de Montréal (FOHM)—federation of non-profit housing organizations of Montréal—was formed in June 1987. That same year, the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM)—Montréal local housing authority—offered FOHM its first residence for homeless people. Six social housing and support services buildings (200 units) were then entrusted to FOHM.

The FOHM mandate is to provide clean, safe, permanent, affordable housing to people without access to decent housing and to involve these tenants in managing their own residence. This mandate is achieved by developing transitional and specific objectives to support the residents.

Clients

The units are assigned to single people with no fixed address or people who may be without shelter in the near future. Selection criteria include housing conditions, personal income and independence. The units are intended for men and women 18 years, or older. A gender mix in each of the houses is recommended.

Tenants come from a broad range of backgrounds: street, missions, emergency shelters, transitional housing, hospitals and from the community at

large. In addition to financial problems, some tenants also deal with other issues—alcohol and drug addiction, mental health problems, AIDS, physical abuse, etc. The most recent statistics (December 1997) indicate that 62 per cent of the tenants reside in their apartments for more than two years.

Philosophy

It is not normal for people to live on the street. Social housing and support services are primarily an attempt to create residential stability as an anchor in the community. Provision of social housing with community support is based on core values—having a place to call one's own, choosing where to live, playing a normal tenant's role, in situ learning in permanent quarters, and obtaining flexible and personalized support.

Funding

Special funding from the Société d'habitation du Québec, through its budget allocations to the OMHM made this experiment possible. This pilot project also called for funding from the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux; however, this has not been finalized yet. The apartments are subsidized and tenants are required to pay a rent equivalent to 25 per cent of their income, plus a monthly fee to cover some extra services provided by the project.

FACT SHEET

Fédération des organismes sans but lucratif d'habitation de Montréal (FOHM)

1650 St-Timothée Street, Suite 206,
Montréal, Québec H2L 3P1

Contact: Norma Drolet, FOHM General Manager

Project description

FOHM comprises 39 non-profit housing agencies in Montréal, representing nearly 2,000 units. FOHM also directly administers six residences on behalf of the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM). FOHM social support services are provided mainly for tenants in these six residences (193 units) to encourage residential stability and improve tenants' living conditions.

Project start

The FOHM inaugural meeting was held on June 3, 1987.

Clients

Single, low-income individuals at risk of social marginalization.

Basic philosophy

Provide clean, safe, permanent, affordable housing for financially disadvantaged individuals without decent housing, and involve these people in the management of their residences.

Funding

FOHM member corporations receive subsidies through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) programs. FOHM also receives exceptional financing from the SHQ for the OMHM buildings (pilot project).

Management style

Accounting, financial, property and social management.

Services and innovative elements

FOHM provides financial and property management services for its non-profit organizations. It also offers social support services in some residences.

Challenge of the future

Increase diversity of funding sources. Use a cross-sector approach to inform the population of the need to help people who are excluded and marginalized. Demonstrate how social housing and support services can prevent homelessness.

PROJECT HISTORY

The first non-profit social housing agencies offering support services started in downtown Montréal districts in the 1980s. At the time, rental housing conditions for roomers differed greatly from today's conditions. Destructive fires, extremely high rents, archaic municipal regulations and rampant land speculation made the already difficult living conditions even worse for downtown dwellers. The City of Montréal did little to help the roomers, most of whom were single, marginalized people; it even questioned their presence in the downtown core. To rectify the situation, local community social service centres (CLSCs), social workers and individuals working for agencies offering assistance to homeless people claimed that individuals have a "right to rooms" and requested decent housing in the City of Montréal.

The First Montréal Non-Profit Housing Agencies

To find tangible solutions to the difficult living conditions of both roomers and homeless people in the downtown core, the players set up the first non-profit housing agencies in the city of Montréal: *Chambrelle*, *Ma chambre*, *Chambreville*, *Chambrenfleur*, and *Un toit pour toi*. The pressures on the municipal administration finally prompted the city to amend regulations to allow the construction and renovation of thousands of private sector rooms in the downtown area.

These newly formed, non-profit housing agencies then requested funding from CMHC and the SHQ to purchase and renovate additional rooming houses. Thus, these non-profit organizations were among the first housing industry players to go beyond the strict limits of their mission and propose a number of social objectives.

- Influence the room rental market by establishing a non-profit sector to provide affordable rooms.

- Establish and maintain an inventory of rooms in the downtown core area of Montréal.
- Encourage the rental market to invest in rooming house renovations.
- Encourage rooming house residents, who are considered tenants without rights, to assume their role as responsible citizens.
- Involve these people in the cooperative management of their residences.
- Improve roomers' health by providing stable, safe housing and protecting them from excessive rent increases.

Establishment of FOHM

During the mid-1980s, the non-profit organizations met with the Montréal Rooming House Consultation Committee, and they felt a need to combine their efforts in order to share expertise and increase their power to purchase services. The Consultation Committee was dissolved and a federation of agencies then took on the responsibility of providing housing for single, low-income individuals.

FOHM was established on June 3, 1987, during the International Year of the Homeless. At the time, FOHM comprised 12 housing corporations. Today, FOHM includes 39 housing corporations, representing a service delivery of nearly 2,000 housing units in Montréal. These various services include group purchases, group and home insurance and accounting, financial, realty and social services. Each service can also be subdivided into numerous activities, which make up the body of property management tasks provided by FOHM.

The establishment of a home insurance plan for members in 1991 was one of the first services developed by FOHM. This initiative may seem ordinary; however, it became significant since, at the time, most corporations and rooming houses

did not have access to this sort of protection because of its excessive cost and the high risk nature of the tenant clientele. This service meant considerable insurance savings for members, up to \$4,000 annually for some corporations. Furthermore—and this is an important advantage given the changing role of the welfare state—these new services enabled FOHM to diversify funding sources and achieve greater financial independence.

Developing Support Services in Some FOHM Residences

In its start-up year, FOHM was awarded a service contract by the OMHM to manage the Chambredor rooming house. The OMHM recognized the agency's expertise in working with people threatened with social marginalization (people with mental health and substance abuse problems, etc.). Eventually, FOHM signed other agreements with the OMHM. FOHM finally assumed complete management of six residences—a total of 193 units—on behalf of the OMHM. As a result, full management of specific houses was added to FOHM original terms of reference.

These new responsibilities proved to be significant because FOHM has developed its social housing and support services management expertise in these six OMHM houses. It is important to note that many of FOHM's founding members and several current administrators had extensive experience working with individuals in difficulty (such as homelessness, substance abuse, isolation, mental illness, poverty). Presently, FOHM provides support services in 325 units: 193 for OMHM, 51 for the Résidence de l'Académie corporation, 47 for the Foyer des cent abris corporation, 19 for the Un toit pour toi corporation and 15 for the Chambreville corporation.

FOHM Challenges

Today, it is clear that the proponents' initial involvement has inspired a new vision in the development of housing for single, low-income people threatened with marginalization. This

vision has evolved over the last 10 years. Today, FOHM is determined to seek the decompartmentalization of intervention and government support to broaden the financial component for social housing and support services. This goal is even more important because the OHM now has a growing clientele as a result of a combination of factors, such as the disinstitutionalization of mentally ill people, the increasing number of young tenants and the influx of numerous AIDS sufferers.

It is more difficult to stabilize these new tenants from a residential perspective, and they have a tendency to settle more permanently in their units. In fact, housing integration is often the ultimate integration these people can hope for, given their physical and/or social frailty. For some residents coming from transitional lodging and recovering from difficult life experiences (depression, illness, job loss, etc.), FOHM housing has become a permanent home. From this perspective, the challenge for FOHM and its administrators is to resist the pressures of the trend toward disinstitutionalization and continue to maintain the tenant mix in the homes.

Given the current changing role of government and emerging needs, FOHM possesses definite attributes which could encourage the development of a social housing and support services formula. Nevertheless, according to FOHM administrators (Jetté et al., 1998), non-profit housing organizations must remain vigilant. Some government guidelines threaten to involve FOHM and non-profit housing organizations in the dynamics of government subcontracting. However, a well-defined strategy, including establishment of a close network of carefully selected partners, could enable these organizations to maintain their independence and gain increased recognition for the social housing and support services formula.

Furthermore, research by the Laboratoire de recherche sur les pratiques et les politiques sociales de l'Université du Québec à Montréal (LAREPPS-UQAM)—social practices and policies research laboratory—demonstrates that this housing model vastly enhances quality of life

for people dealing with various social adaptation problems. In an attempt to consolidate the community-based support services provided to these tenants, for the last several years FOHM has asked the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux to provide financial support. That is why,

in concert with the public and private sectors—and as a dynamic element in the new social economy—FOHM seeks recognition of its expertise and experience working with extremely marginalized individuals.

CLIENT PROFILE

In 1994, the 39 FOHM member corporations housed nearly 2,000 single, low-income, marginalized individuals. These people were often undereducated, increasingly dependent, debt ridden, and most were on welfare. Although FOHM does not have statistics on the male/female ratio for all 2,000 units, at least two member corporations each manages a number of residences exclusively for women (i.e., the Réseau hébergement femmes and the Chance Project) (Jetté et al., 1998).

Two thirds of the tenants in the six FOHM-managed OMHM residences suffer from multiple problems such as mental illness, drug addiction, homelessness, abuse and violence. In addition, a study conducted for the Montréal Centre Regional Health Board indicated that, in 1993, 33 per cent of the tenants were HIV-positive or had AIDS. This figure only accounts for reported cases. The actual proportion of OMHM tenants suffering from this disease is likely closer to 50 per cent, based on the estimates of FOHM personnel (Jetté et al., 1998).

Statistics for 1997 indicate that 84 per cent of the 193 tenants in the six FOHM-administered residences received income security benefits; eight per cent of these tenants were under 31 years of age; 63 per cent were between 31 and 50; and 29 per cent were over 50. In 1993, women accounted for 27 per cent of tenants in these six houses, compared to only 17 per cent in 1997. In spite of the serious social problems experienced by several, we estimated that in 1997, 67 per cent of the tenants in these six houses had been residents for over two years. In addition, nearly 30 per cent of these residents had occupied their apartments for more than five years.

The Federation has received increasing demands for housing since the early 1990s. Altogether, more than 600 requests for housing are sent to the Federation each year, including incomplete applications (roughly one third of applications). The following table includes only completed applications. However, it demonstrates that it is

increasingly difficult for applicants to obtain FOHM housing. These difficulties are related to the direction taken by government social housing policies. In fact, since the federal government decision to freeze social housing expenditures in 1993, and the Québec government's rather modest commitments during the same period, construction of new social housing units has become increasingly rare in Québec and elsewhere in Canada.

For the last few years, FOHM staff members have also observed changes in the age demographics. Residents who have occupied their units for some time are ageing, thus increasing the average age of tenants. This trend is offset by an influx of new, increasingly younger tenants, compared to the clientele a few years ago.

Young drug addicts are also more unstable from a residential perspective than older roomers suffering from alcoholism or mental illness (Jetté et al., 1998: 24). The decreasing age of tenants means a shift in issues. "Instead of the beer-culture roomers of the 1980s," writes the FOHM general manager in an article for *Info-to't* magazine, "modern housing applicants are younger and are dealing with various drug-related problems." Staff must therefore deal more and more often with clients who are less firmly "grounded" people who have nothing to lose and who often suffer from serious multiple drug addictions.

Generally, we are observing the phenomenon of an increase in the number of new, young tenants, leading to greater residential instability. However, we should not generalize this situation to include all young applicants. Those who are not experiencing major drug problems often benefit from work and study plans, which can go hand in hand with residential stability.

Florence

Florence suffered from severe, chronic agoraphobia. She was barely 30 years old and had already spent half of her life avoiding social contact. She could

Number of applicants who obtained housing vs. number of applicants on the FOHM waiting list, 1994-97

	1994	1995	1996	1997*
No. of applicants on the waiting list	395	426	417	440
No. of applicants who obtained housing	110	70	73	61
Percentage of applicants who obtained housing versus number of applicants on the waiting list	28 %	16 %	17 %	14 %

Note: * Annual estimate based on the first 11 months of 1997 (Jetté et al., 1998).

not visit her family or friends and she was unable to function normally; she found herself homeless. Florence finally ended up at Chainon, a shelter for homeless women.

This agency houses women experiencing various difficulties, but the length of stay is limited. Florence's income was modest and she was unable to find a suitable apartment in a hurry. Because she suffered from agoraphobia, she had to find a place to live where she felt protected from the pressures of her surroundings. It is already difficult to find such a place under normal conditions. Imagine what it's like when a person's income comes from security benefits and financial resources are limited!

Fortunately, she heard about FOHM and the social support it provided. She submitted an application and signed her lease in 1990. Even at this point, nothing was easy for Florence. She needed the assistance of a social worker to finally move into the new accommodation. It took her a while before she was able to stay in her studio apartment.

In spite of her difficulties, Florence was an extremely cultivated woman who could even be quite sociable if she felt respected in her personal space. She quickly became one of the pillars of the residence; many tenants came to seek her advice or simply spend time with her. In turn, she knew that she would receive all the respect and support she needed from the other tenants and was eventually able to control her fears.

During the following months, Florence gradually expanded her environment. She spent an increasing amount of time in the yard and went to the laundry room, a few metres away from her apartment, to do her own laundry. These were small victories, but the ability to function at her own pace gave her renewed hope. In the past, Florence had been treated for her illness and eventually, completely paralyzed by fear, she had to stop the treatments because she was unable to leave her home.

With this type of illness, progress made over time is not a full guarantee against relapse. Thus, Florence experienced periods of disorientation where she had to leave home to seek professional help. Crisis periods often reveal how much a person has evolved. In Florence's case, she had developed enough trust with FOHM staff to refuse ambulance assistance and to go to the hospital with her building superintendent.

However, major changes in Florence's life were yet to come. Through a telephone dating service, she met a man who lived in her neighbourhood. He became her boyfriend and because he only had a modest income, he applied to live in Florence's residence. His application was approved and he signed a lease in 1994. From that time on, Florence made more effort to overcome her fear: she went to the building entrance, attended community suppers, etc.

Finally, Florence and her boyfriend made plans to marry and move to a new place. The idea of marrying the person she loved prompted Florence

to increase her efforts to overcome her illness. She even felt strong enough to ride around the block in a car. She returned from this "expedition" exhausted, but confident that, when the time came, she would be able to move into her new home.

Mr. Charles

Mr. Charles had been a FOHM tenant for 18 months and had many plans. But first he had to overcome the difficulties lying ahead.

Before coming to FOHM, Mr. Charles had been diagnosed with manic-depressive disorder. He suffered from repeated episodes of depression; his main goal in life was day-to-day survival. At the time, he said that every step was like "a mountain"!

Mr. Charles was married, but when he separated from his wife it was a shock for him. After the separation, Mr. Charles went through a period of disorientation and was forced to live with friends. His adoptive parents were dead, and he decided to search for his biological mother. When he finally found her, after three years of searching, she refused to renew contact with him. To make things worse, his ex-wife denied him the right to see his daughter, although she wanted to see him. His daughter was having trouble with the law and at school as well.

Mr. Charles finally rented a room in the Montréal South Central district. He spent more than 45 per cent of his monthly income on rent and, under these circumstances, he knew he would never be able to see his daughter again. Nevertheless, he still had to live somewhere. After a few months, he couldn't afford the rent any longer. All he had left was his old car, in which he slept at night. Desperate, he applied for FOHM social housing. At that moment, he felt he had reached bottom.

However, on his birthday he was happy to hear that there was a FOHM studio apartment available. His faith in the future was restored. He decided to seek social guidance to help him.

Mr. Charles has recovered his determination to live. His daughter now visits him, which seems to reflect positively on her school marks and her behaviour. Mr. Charles works as a volunteer with physical rehabilitation patients. He has started psychotherapy and works out regularly at a nearby fitness centre. Mr. Charles is even exploring the possibility of returning to school or to work. His doctor has also decreased Mr. Charles' medication significantly; now anything is possible!

MANAGEMENT OF FOHM RESIDENCES

FOHM is a federation of non-profit housing agencies in the Montréal area. It is responsible for political representation and provision of services to its members. FOHM also manages adapted social housing projects to "enable tenants to develop, recover or maintain a certain degree of independence" in a healthy, low-cost residence. Existing institutional and community network resources, among other factors, had to be taken into consideration. FOHM social support services were added to regular resources as part of a rehabilitation-to-integration continuum. This original housing management formula, which includes support services, was initially developed in the six FOHM-managed OMHM residences.

FOHM employs 20 full-time workers, including the general manager, assistant manager (coordinates property management services), secretary and two accounting clerks. Additional workers are hired occasionally to perform specific cleaning and maintenance tasks. Other staff members also include social workers and resident superintendents who share social support duties.

In the FOHM-managed OMHM buildings, a team of six superintendents, five of whom are residents, provide some of the support services. In addition to their cleaning, maintenance and building security duties, the superintendents provide a reassuring physical and psychological presence and ensure compliance with in-house regulations. There are also 2.5 workers who provide psychological and guidance services to the tenants.

The OMHM pays for the equivalent of 2.5 of the four full-time FOHM social worker positions. FOHM assumes the costs for 1.5 positions, which provide these services in the other residences. Tenant support services include lease management, consulting, referral, crisis management and prevention. It also provides group intervention such as tenant meetings, outings and art shows by tenants.

As pointed out, the FOHM social management style is designed to allow tenants to take charge of their lives through their own efforts. This is achieved through various interactive methods adapted to tenants' culture, values, needs and development. Tenants are invited to participate in the new tenant selection process and the FOHM Board of Directors. Each building has common areas (common room, yard or balcony) where tenants can relax or meet.

The Board of Directors consists of nine members elected by the general assembly: four representatives of non-profit organization members, two partner agencies, two tenants and one employee. Its function is similar to that of any board of directors in a rental property: day-to-day operations management, accounting, budget preparation, etc. In addition, in the FOHM-managed OMHM buildings, the support services provided for tenants involve other tasks unlike the regular duties of housing administrators.

Thus, a prerogative of the non-profit organizations and FOHM housing administrators is to find a residence according to the client's needs. For example, if possible, older tenants suffering from alcohol-related problems will be grouped together, on the same floor and in the same section of a residence. Generally, these tenants go to bed early (given their intoxication state) and rise early in the morning. Conversely, younger tenants will have a tendency to prefer night life. Therefore, efforts are made to adapt to the tenants' pace and to group them according to their habits.

On a broader scale, each house presents a specific profile. During admission interviews, one of the most important selection criteria is whether or not the candidate will be able to adapt to the culture of the residence. In some residences, FOHM staff members are relied on to select new tenants according to sociological characteristics and social frailties. Social life and cohesiveness depend largely on the administrators and social workers' ability to maintain some balance in the various

types of clientele within the residences, and on their ability to make selections according to the general culture of the residences. FOHM personnel, who consider the importance of maintaining the client mix structure within the houses (Jetté et al., 1998) also share these concerns.

This type of management goes beyond the regular participation in FOHM activities. It is designed to develop a sense of responsibility, to generate reaction and to provide adequate protection for tenants facing specific problems. Staff encourage residents to get together and take responsibility for conflicts or situations which may arise. For example, we ask tenants to inform us if neighbours are noisy or if there are intruders in the residence.

According to social workers, there seems to be a link between the individual sense of proprietorship for an apartment and the sense of collective proprietorship within a residence (Jetté et al., 1998). People who take charge of their environment, who decorate the room and keep it clean, have a greater tendency to develop a sense of belonging and, in general, participate more in the community.

In conclusion, the type of social management used by FOHM allows single, low-income individuals to obtain suitable housing and provides tenants with opportunities to make decisions and take responsibilities, with the assistance of flexible, personal support services. For many, this support is vital to their ability to maintain an apartment and remain part of the community.

FINANCIAL PROFILE

FOHM funding comes from various sources, according to two key responsibilities. The first is daily property management and FOHM responsibilities toward its non-profit members. Financing for the purchase of property and maintenance is provided entirely by the SHQ and CMHC. Some member organizations have obtained funding from other sources (e.g., the regional board), to provide support services for residents. However, such funds are in addition to the SHQ and CMHC subsidies.

A group of services has also been developed over the years to support organizations such as administrative and financial management services, property management and case management (social support). There is also income derived from special services, such as housing insurance, representing considerable savings for members.

The second key responsibility of FOHM involves overall management of the six OMHM residences and support services. These important activities are the cornerstone of FOHM expertise in the area of social support provided for the tenants. Dispensing this type of service is made possible through additional funding from the SHQ (equal to 2.5 staff per year) and a modest contribution from tenants.

This additional funding is the subject of litigation between FOHM and the OMHM—the public institution which funnels the SHQ subsidies for the six FOHM-managed houses. To add a few words on the cross-sector approach: by promoting this notion in the field of social housing and support services, some public institutions will be forced to decompartmentalize their intervention to bridge the gap between social housing and the needs of the residents.

In an interview with LAREPPS-UQAM researchers, FOHM general manager, Norma Drolet pointed out that “government decision-makers are used to reviewing requests for recognition and funding which refer to only one area of intervention. The

decision-makers are ready to talk about housing or mental health, social services, employment, etc., but only one at a time.” FOHM is not alone in facing the lack of understanding and limited sector approach used by several government departments and institutions. Other agencies, wishing to be acknowledged for their contribution in areas related to, but outside their narrow mission statements, must also deal with these institutional barriers.

Also, for the time being, OMHM directors have refused to ask the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux to acknowledge the OMHM financial involvement with respect to the increasingly dependent and marginalized people living in FOHM social housing. After more than 10 years of discussion, the Department still does not seem to recognize the sound basis of OMHM involvement with FOHM (Jetté et al., 1998). At least for now, we have abandoned the idea of receiving acknowledgement for this financial contribution. In practice, this lack of recognition results in recurrent OMHM budget cutbacks, which leaves the OMHM on its own to provide funding for the social support services provided by FOHM in the six residences. The budget cutbacks have forced the OMHM to seek alternatives to direct funding for the services provided in its six residences. The OMHM directors have suggested reviewing funding of FOHM social services. The result may be financial hardship for FOHM.

There may be solutions ahead. An increasing number of social players and government decision makers are adopting the principle of cross-sector responsibility as indicated in the latest health and social services organizational plan submitted by the Montréal Centre Regional Board (1998-2002). In this document, the Board indicates its direction toward enhancement of cross-sector cooperation at both the local and regional levels. The Board adds that this cooperation should focus on action and involve community partners, including social and economic development parties, based on the

common, freely shared goals set by these partners. Significantly, this improvement plan cites the creation of a support fund for cross-sector cooperation, with an annual budget of \$1.4 million to encourage partnership. Let us hope this fund will change the partnering practices and financial support, adjustments on which the social housing and support services formula may rely.

MANDATE AND PHILOSOPHY

The FOHM general mandate focusses on social management concept and is designed to "provide clean, safe, permanent, affordable housing for the economically disadvantaged, who have limited access to decent housing, and to involve these tenants in managing their own residences." A unique feature of the agency is its provision (in association with external resources) of support services for the tenants of six OMHM residences (and a number of other residences owned by the 39 member corporations. The services include the treatment of tenants' problems such as mental illness, drug and alcohol addictions and AIDS.

In general, FOHM intervention is also designed to "enable tenants to develop, recover or maintain a certain degree of autonomy." We try to achieve this objective by encouraging the development of basic daily living skills (hygiene, nutrition, etc.), promoting a sense of individual and collective ownership of the apartments, attenuating the effects of tenants' personal and social isolation, and encouraging tenants' involvement in their community.

This mandate and these objectives are based on a philosophy (or paradigm) presented by the Laboratoire de recherche sur les pratiques et les politiques sociales de l'Université du Québec à Montréal (LAREPPS-UQAM) in a research document evaluating the FOHM social housing and support services approach (Jetté et al., 1998). A comparison of the key elements of this philosophy and of the former approach is presented below.

Along with the FOHM's objectives, the elements of this new paradigm may be defined as follows.

- Having a personal space. Recognition of each individual's right to privacy and a private life.
- Choosing a place to live. Ability to decide whether to stay or leave.
- Assuming normal roles. Signing a lease,

receiving the keys and being a responsible tenant, like any other citizen.

- Social integration. Into a neighbourhood and its accompanying resources through a mixed environment which includes people with differentiated psycho social traits to avoid "ghettoization."
- In-situ learning in permanent quarters. Means respecting the community way of life and developing or maintaining basic life skills in a permanent place of residence.
- Provision of flexible, personalized support and services. Through adapted social support encourages the individual to develop a sense of personal and community belonging.

As a result of the FOHM project, the concept of social housing and support services has gone beyond the experimental phase; its validity has been proven. The LAREPPS-UQAM study also demonstrated that tenants' quality of life has been greatly enhanced since their arrival in FOHM housing (Jetté et al., 1998). There is an indication that social housing and support services can improve the situation of people who are excluded and marginalized and, furthermore, encourage social reintegration. This method of prevention and social reintegration is innovative since it situates intervention at the socioeconomic and environmental levels. Social support provides daily guidance to tenants, and encourages them to take their responsibilities and to develop a sense of belonging in the community, by becoming responsible tenants and good neighbours. This support is provided on an ongoing, or as needed, basis, to ensure that other tenants may be helped once the first ones have achieved some stability.

Some representatives of the partner agencies working with FOHM are quick to acknowledge our expertise; they are satisfied and even impressed with the success of the social housing and support services formula. Some have said that

"FOHM employs...a winning formula for a certain number of individuals," while others go as far as declaring that "contrary to what we can find elsewhere, FOHM provides extraordinary service. The superintendents always try to resolve problems in a courteous, respectful manner; that really blew me away" (Jetté et al., 1998).

The social housing concept implemented by FOHM launches the types of intervention used to date for people threatened by marginalization. Henceforth, these people will be called on to play an active part in the process leading to their social integration. The social support provided by FOHM is truly representative of the "independent living movement," a new intervention method designed to include people experiencing health and social difficulties in the decision-making process (Vaillancourt, 1997). This new philosophy strives to empower individuals and encourage a user-led approach over a user-centred approach (Jetté et al., 1998).

In spite of the undeniable success of the social housing and support services formula, to develop the approach fully, certain institutional procedures must be amended. In the social housing field, an influx of clients dealing with multiple problems (e.g., homelessness, mental illness and addiction to drugs at the same time) has forced social workers to review previous methods and consider tenants' circumstances from a global perspective. We feel that government social policies should better reflect these changes by using new cross-

sector approaches which are more likely to have a positive effect on current social problems (Jetté et al., 1998).

This is a considerable challenge for the proponents of social housing and support services, whose funding depends largely on recognition of the cross-sector approach and the adoption of new government procedures. This is also a challenge for the government and the various institutions, which have to learn to decompartmentalize their services and bridge the gap among the numerous needs of the people at risk.

Furthermore, it is clear for many FOHM partners and housing experts (Jetté et al., 1998; RRSSMC, 1998; Québec Mental Health Committee, 1998) that social housing and support services are more and more important in the new concept of responsibility sharing between the government and social sector. Through its partnership and other activities which endeavour to link social and economic factors, FOHM is an excellent example of these new initiatives stemming from the social economy which has emerged in recent years in Québec. Based on a local development approach which addresses many aspects, the social housing and support services formula questions bureaucratic and sectoral methods as well as traditional corporate cultures, which often do not respond adequately to the needs of the community.

From this perspective, why not dream a little and take our reasoning one step further? Why not

Elements of the New Paradigm

Old paradigm	New paradigm
Residential treatment plan	Personal space
Placement	Choice
Role as client	Normal roles
Grouping by disability	Social integration
Transitional location	In-situ learning in permanent quarters
Standard level of service	Personalized, flexible support and services
Sources: Morin (1992) and Ridway et Zippie (1990)	

create a social housing and support services formula which would truly represent more than a simple local initiative? Could this not, in its own way, be the first step to a new way of thinking about our society? Would this not encourage new procedures which would focus on the needs of individuals rather than on the accumulation of

monetary wealth alone? Is it sheer utopianism to think that social housing and support services could contribute to the development of a new social and economic model? Think about it, who knows, perhaps the process has already begun.

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***Centre résidentiel et communautaire
Jacques-Cartier***

(Québec City, Québec)

Prepared by:

***Centre résidentiel et communautaire
Jacques-Cartier***

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Centre résidentiel et communautaire Jacques-Cartier provides support for the social, educational and professional integration of young adults, ages 16 to 30. Incorporated in 1992, the Centre was created to respond to a lack of affordable housing for young adults and to support the belief of its founding members, Jacques Laverdière, Serge Gagné and Daniel Pelletier, that housing resources must be structured to meet the needs of these individuals. The Centre's initiative to provide support to troubled youth, mainly from downtown areas of Québec City, obtained immediate acceptance from community agencies and considerable assistance from Québec City, local community social services centre (CLSC) Basse-Ville and the Québec Catholic School Board.

In support of its residential program, the Centre obtained a mortgage of nearly \$1.5 million and a deficit subsidy under a Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation-Société d'habitation du Québec (CMHC-SHQ) agreement to provide 27 apartments, with rents corresponding to 25 per cent of tenants' income. Operating costs for the community-based program (more than \$320,000 for reception and support services, programming and community activities, training, project start-

up and monitoring) are mainly covered by United Way and various provincial government authorities.

The Centre offers a varied and stable lifestyle; housing is included as a support service. Its proactive approach focusses on helping residents to develop a life plan which goes beyond the perspective of mere employability. The Centre relies on interactive participation and cooperation of all players, including external and, more important, internal partners (young adult members of the Centre). The Centre's key challenges are to find funding for:

- the community program and its three work experience/training platforms (Ateliers à la terre agricultural workshops, Tam Tam Café and Pouce Vert "green thumb" woodworking shop);
- expansion of these services;
- effects of this expansion on duties and mission; and
- maintenance of a democratic structure and effective mechanisms for interaction within this context.

FACT SHEET

Centre résidentiel et communautaire

Jacques-Cartier

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Description of Centre Jacques-Cartier

Non-profit organization supporting social, educational and professional integration of young adults, ages 16 to 30. Mission: to help young adults overcome isolation, and to define and implement a life plan. Services include housing, created for and managed by young adults.

Operating history

Incorporation: 1992. First tenants arrived: October 1, 1994. Since 1997: significant development with establishment of three work experience/training platforms.

Impetus

Lack of affordable housing for young adults. Low cost housing would likely help these individuals develop a life plan (study, work or community involvement), thus providing enhanced support at the outset of an active life. Premise: housing resources are insufficient to meet the demands of young adults without suitable and extensive structuring.

Key obstacles and support

Acceptance from community agencies in the field: no duplication of existing services. Extensive, varied partnerships (providing funding, services and activities). Young people involved in the project have participated in the activity planning, decision making and management process. The thrust of the project has been publicized repeatedly. Housing program budget cutbacks in 1992-93 threatened the project. Another obstacle: chronic funding demands of the community program (not subsidized by the CMHC-SHQ agreement).

Finance

According to audited 1997 financial statements, residential program income was \$223,711, totally

funded by the SHQ. Expenses were the same. Income for the community program was \$299,304, and expenses were \$299,169, with a surplus of \$135.

Funding sources

Single source for the residential program: the SHQ. There are a number of funding sources for the community program and the financial profile is fragile and complex.

Clients

Young adults (16 to 30 years), mainly from the Québec City core. Target clientele: young people experiencing difficulty consolidating their position within an established integration context (implementation of a life plan). Residential services for approximately 35 people with renewable, one-year leases. Community program: accepts 500 young people annually. There were 65 active members in 1997-98.

Services

- Reception and support services. Centre main entrance. Provides guidance for members' activities. Support services are provided by salaried members and by volunteers.
- Programming and community activities. This service encourages and motivates members and non-members to organize activities at the Centre by diversifying available options (e.g., Tam Tam Café).
- Training. Process enabling young people to reflect on and take action toward achieving their life plan and to accept increased responsibility for their own social, educational and professional direction. Programs are offered at the Centre in cooperation with other agencies.
- Project start-up and monitoring. A logical sequel to the preceding: enable participants to take advantage of monitoring and supervision while pursuing a plan. This way, individuals

and groups may establish constructive projects, tools for socialization and experimentation which will likely result in employment. This is a rapidly growing service which includes three innovative projects currently in place: Ateliers à la terre agricultural workshops, Tam Tam Café and the Pouce Vert woodworking shop.

- Residential services. The living environment offers 27 housing units, based on assessment of the individual's life plan and eligibility for Centre membership. The goal is to ensure greater involvement of tenants in daily operations and to enable them to increase their efforts toward implementing their life plan.

Innovative features

- Rich and stable community setting in which housing is included as a support service.
- Proactive approach. We provide opportunities and time to experiment. The training covers a broader perspective than just mere employability.
- Cooperation in all aspects with external and internal (the young people) partners. Action groups involve young adults. Final decision-making authority rests with the general assembly: every member is consulted and has the right to vote, which provides individuals with a sense of responsibility in the decision process.
- Growth of services. How can we maintain quality of services within the allotted time frame (employees and volunteers)? How can we avoid being overwhelmed by the task and continue to develop the teams' development potential?
- Maintaining a democratic structure with effective mechanisms for interaction. The demands of democracy sometimes lead to conflicts between urgency and importance, time management and duty vs. information. The challenge is to ensure that the housing and benefits received are not the sole reasons behind an individual's participation and interest.
- Willingness of the Centre to recognize a distinct operating method for the residential sector (more closely resembling a housing cooperative than low cost housing).
- The gradual retirement of two of the founding members of the Centre, who are still actively involved, Jacques Laverdière and Serge Gagné, will force the internal resources team to finally face up to its own potential and to the need for independent management.

Contact

Please direct any questions regarding this document or the project to Sylvie Tremblay, salaried member, at (418) 523-1543.

Key challenges

- The importance of community program funding is not properly recognized. Salaried and co-opted people must make a considerable investment. How can we support the jobs created (at the Centre and in the workshops)? How can we "do more with less"?

PROJECT HISTORY

Social and Economic Context

Many low-income earners in Québec City's Lower Town. Most difficult social and economic conditions in metropolitan Québec region. More than two thirds of area residents live on government subsidies (employment insurance, welfare, pension, etc.). Average income considerably lower than for the greater Québec City region, with one third or more of income used for housing. Young people, ages 15 to 30, make up approximately 25 per cent (6,000) of the downtown population. Of these, one in four lives on welfare, one in two holds an unstable job and only one in 10 is in school. Added to the basic problems created by social and economic exclusion (food, housing, chronic indebtedness) are the various difficulties of social exclusion (break with the family, low self-esteem, lack of recreation, physical and psychological exhaustion, drug addiction, violence, mental illness, etc.).

1990

CMHC called for proposals for the creation of subsidized non-profit housing organizations.

Identifying a Need

Jacques Laverdière, local community social services centre (CLSC) Basse-Ville community organizer observed that housing for young people is not viable without structure, global vision, personal support and the intervention of numerous players.

Serge Gagné, educational guidance counsellor for the Louis-Jolliet adult training centre noted that young people returning to school want to succeed but often quit due to lack of emotional and material support to achieve their objectives. Private housing is too expensive.

Daniel Pelletier, founding member of the work action group, stated that business agencies are not doing enough; young people need a place where

they belong to have a reason to support their goals.

Initial Project

1990

Young people from the downtown core areas were invited to define a housing project for, and managed by young adults. The project focussed on self-empowerment and assistance to make this possible, by combining community services with housing.

How to get started? The organizers turned to the former Jacques-Cartier school, which had been given to Québec City in 1988 by the school board and was now abandoned. The location in downtown Québec City, near youth support agencies, and the structure—three floors above a ground floor—were determining selection factors. This building would allow the combination of residential and community functions in one location.

The initial project called for 21 units, (13 family apartments and eight singles, using three floors, i.e., 1,580 m²). The rent corresponds to 25 per cent of tenants' income. When the request for subsidy was presented, the project specified that most of the rooms, studios and common areas would be located on the upper floors. The ground floor and basement would be reserved for Québec City departments, with building access rights for the requesting agency.

October 15, 1990

Request filed with the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ).

December 1990

Project presented at the Gabrielle-Roy library on the last evening of public hearings on the future of the Saint-Roch district. The project was approved by the public and the commissioners.

February 1991

Project rejected for technical reasons.

Second Project

August 1991

Québec City agreed to set the sale price of the building below market value. Awareness activities and political pressures continued to publicize the need for the project. Plans were refined; the young people redefined and detailed their needs. A community vision was developed, calling for the establishment of a resource centre to provide information, guidance, support and assistance, help to involve young people in a back-to-school project, work study program, self-development and community action, etc. It would be a meeting place where people would take the time to accept and assist youth in their search for autonomy.

From this point forward, housing was considered a tool which would provide consolidation and stability during the transition period, when young people were facing serious financial burden, but were making an effort toward professional or academic integration. The cornerstone of the Centre's approach would be "capable but not ready." The young adults receiving assistance from Centre services were, in principle, capable of entering the job market or furthering their education or training, but were simply not yet ready, due to lack of structure, assistance, guidance, exploration, information, motivation, esteem or coaching.

January 20, 1992

Project filed a second time. Selected layout, 23 apartments (17 studios, three one-bedroom units and three two-bedroom units), a common room on the top floor and a front office on the ground floor. The same site was suggested as in the previous proposal.

June 8, 1992

Project approved. The Centre would become owner of the community portion of the building. The subsidy granted for the housing portion (nearly \$1.5 million) would compensate for the difference between the anticipated annual operating costs for the project and income-based rents paid by tenants.

July 23, 1992

Obtained letters of patent and incorporation as a private non-profit organization.

November 10, 1992

Conditional commitment from the SHQ.

November 27, 1992

Took possession of former school building. Death of founding member Daniel Pelletier.

January 21, 1993

Duly elected Coordinating Committee met for the first time. This was followed by six meetings with the young adults, agencies offering assistance and community organizers to lay the groundwork for the Centre (type of housing units, constitution and by-laws, definition of membership contracts, member-tenant selection process and criteria, board of directors' role and powers, and in-house code of living).

April 7, 1993

First general assembly.

Summer 1993

The SHQ reviewed its programming. A concern was brought up regarding the evaluation of the project according to technical data (construction had not yet started, little money was actually invested to date) without regard for the profound personal investment of individuals.

Construction

Once approved by the SHQ, the project only grew from 23 to 27 units, due to physical and budgetary constraints. It was agreed that construction plans and contractor visits would only begin once the young people had cleaned up the building.

November 1993

The building sold for \$66,300.

November 27, 1993

First community gathering held in the building. Start-up of work crews and establishment of first reception and response services. Training process

began. Meetings organized to consider general regulations.

Colette Lavoie, CLSC Basse-Ville community organizer, joined the team, inspiring the members with her democratic ideals.

January 1994

The SHQ signed a final commitment, agreeing to a mortgage of \$1,463,893 as interim financing. Apartment-type modifications confirmed. Clean-up and demolition was finished and contract work could begin. These operations took nearly eight months.

Summer 1994

First selection meetings with future tenants.

October 1, 1994

First tenants arrived.

November 1, 1994

Common room still under construction; first three employees hired. Election of the first board of managers. The Centre was under way.

Services Established

1995

Activities and services were organized: young people involved in all decisions, at every level. Establish work experience/training platforms for need-related experimentation, enabling the youth to evolve, identify projects and take charge of the Centre. Collective action began, such as preparation of a memo on welfare reform. Some activities expanded, others were modified or abandoned, according to the priorities of the young people. Duties were specified based on the strengths and interests of each individual present.

Finally, all the locations were accessible to members under one roof. On the first floor and in the basement was a common room subdivided into three areas (reception-information, Tam Tam Café and Tam Tam Café stage), three administrative offices, a classroom, multi-purpose room (large enough for meetings, equipped with two computers and accessories for members' use), Tam Tam Café

kitchen and cold storage, and carpentry shop (office, two workshops and a show room). On the three upper floors (access restricted to residents, intercom for visitors at the reception desk) were 27 apartments (seven rooms, 10 studios, seven one-bedroom apartments and three two-bedroom units) as well as two laundry rooms (on the second and third floors). There was also a parking lot adjacent to the building for tenants' use.

October 1997

The Centre won the top award among 143 participants in the concept and design category of the CMHC Housing Awards Program.

Growth

1996-98

Three innovative projects—the establishment of work experience/training platforms based on common goals: produce consumer goods and services, create jobs for the young people, serve as a basis for social or professional integration and encourage learning through an interactive management model.

Ateliers à la terre agricultural workshops

In the spring of 1996, six young people completed internships in organic farming with agricultural producers. The experience highlighted an urgent need for suitable training to develop a serious, viable cooperative production project. In March 1996, the Sisters of Charity and the Robert-Giffard Hospital were approached to donate land and equipment in the Bourg-Royal area (Beauport), under conditions which would facilitate the development of an experimental community farm to be operated by young people. Agreement was obtained in the fall of 1996. In February, an agreement was reached with the Québec Regional Economic Council regarding a subsidy. The work platform was structured around a variety of products including greenhouse and open air production of organic vegetables, herbs and edible flowers, organic honey, quail, guinea hen and hens' eggs, ornamental horticulture, hydroponics, educational and recreational operation of a rural site. The young people would learn to work as a team and would receive a portion of the harvest in return (a

portion of the products would also supply the Tam Tam Café and another portion would be sold). The project encourages the contribution to local and regional development through:

- development of a traditional economic sector which young city dwellers are not taking advantage of presently;
- diversified use of the agricultural potential of urban land;
- local production with study of impact on quality of life;
- on-site monitoring of the production cycle; and
- solidarity and complementarity of urban and rural zones.

There are educational workshops planned for the general public and group visits for school children. The entire agricultural site will eventually provide a concrete example of a project designed for the well being of staff and the community and rational use of resources.

Tam Tam Café

The Tam Tam Café is an alternative location to:

- address the problem of hunger with modestly priced health food for workers and young people in the neighbourhood;
- develop cultural awareness through various activities (painting exhibits, poetry readings, musical evenings, seminars, discussion groups, etc.); and
- provide an on-the-job training site.

The project created one part-time and two full-time jobs for young people, funded until March 1999 by the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre (SQDM) and its Fonds décentralisé de création d'emplois (Regional Development Secretariat and Income Security—Decentralized Job Creation Fund). The project is also associated with the agricultural workshop. A group of young people displayed tangible efforts to create an alternative to exclusion in their own environment, reflecting their values, concerns and methods. This project will enable them to take responsibility for part of their own food

production and distribution network. When the Café became an official project, the young people began to build the restaurant, tearing down partitions, plastering and painting. The Café opened in December 1997, with inaugural ceremonies on March 18, 1998. The inclusion of this ecological and cultural café in the community centre enables the use and transformation of some of the Ateliers à la terre products and is a way of restructuring specific reception/information and programming services. Thus, the common room, which many felt lacked friendliness and warmth (no decoration, concrete floors, plain coloured walls), was transformed into a dynamic area. The Café houses the reception area giving it a personalized and homey character, a soul and, through this, invites new young people into the Centre.

Pouce Vert woodworking shop

The mission of the Pouce Vert woodworking shop is to produce and market (sales and installation) wooden gardening and outdoor items (planters and balcony planters, shelving, chairs, tables, bird houses, plant dryers). In cooperation with the Ateliers à la terre, the woodworking shop also provides gardening consulting services for indoor and outdoor gardening using a horti-therapeutic approach. Specific work is assigned to target groups (senior citizens, disinstitutionalized or single people) using a group therapy approach. The rooms are located in the Centre basement.

The workshop offers six-month to one-year personal and occupational development internships for six young adults, enrolled in a recognized socio-occupational training course. Two salaried workers, who started in the spring of 1998, help the interns with their daily work. The training was organized and funded through agreements with the SQDM (Regional Development Secretariat, Poverty Fund social economic program) and the Commission des écoles catholiques de Québec (CECQ), while private lenders were solicited to provide additional financing (i.e., the Saison nouvelle Foundation). The shop is also available (with on-site assistance during off hours) to other Centre youth wishing to complete personal projects.

October 1998

The Centre is striving to obtain special residential status from the SHQ. The Centre hopes to be recognized as a housing cooperative rather than as low-rental housing. The administrative report prepared by the SHQ, combined with the support provided by Fédération régionale des coopératives d'habitation (FRECHAQ)—Québec Regional Cooperative Housing Federation—shed some light on the conflict areas between the two organizations. With the assistance of FRÉCHAQ and CQCH (Québec Confederation of Housing), the Centre plans to approach the SHQ this year. The Centre has also been asked to join the new Québec-Chaudière-Appalaches Federation of Housing Cooperatives (FROHOC).

1999

The work experience/training platforms are continuing their operation. The Centre hopes the

local employment centres will recognize the Centre's training services to maximize referral of young adults and to encourage future employers and firms to recognize the programs, thus facilitating entry into the work environment. As a major development, the Centre expects, among other initiatives, to extend training activities to reach more young single mothers and high school drop-outs. The quality work of members is increasingly well known and other agencies are now referring youth from a wider area. More and more, the Centre welcomes youth from other neighbourhoods, with similar characteristics as those of the downtown district: exclusion, poverty, inactivity, high drop-out rate, personal and family problems, etc. To be successful in their activities, members must be determined and well organized; they know as well that the people in the community have an active role to play to ensure that the Centre satisfies their needs as effectively as possible.

General Description

Note that the Centre never uses the expression "clientele" but rather "members" or "people" who come to the Centre.

From October 1, 1994, to date, 82 people (41 women and 41 men) have occupied, or still occupy one of the 27 apartments at the Centre. During this period, the average age of the residents was 25.5 years for women and 29 for men. In addition, there were seven children (four girls and three boys) aged 0 to 16 years (average age, three years). The average length of stay is 507 days for women and 601 days for men. However, during the same period, in accordance with general regulations, four people lost their membership and residential status; these were four men with a history of delinquency. The description of these young adults when they arrive is quite similar: most did not finish high school, had addiction problems and came from dysfunctional families with whom they had little or no contact. Most have spent time in foster or group homes and, a new phenomenon, more than half of the young women admitted during the last year are experiencing mental health problems (personality and manic-depressive disorders).

The men/women ratio varies from year to year: from 1994 to 1997, there were 20 per cent more men than women. Over the last two years, this trend has changed. In 1999, the ratio nearly doubled for women. Among male tenants, there is a marked difference in age: from 1994 to 1996, the average age was more than 31 years old. Since 1997, this average has decreased to 25.5 in 1999. Comparatively, the average age for women has remained steady at approximately 25.5 years. There is no known reason for these tendencies, since no priority has been given to particular individuals during the selection process.

The first 27 residents were all unmarried. One third of these left when their leases expired in June 1996. Most were men over 30 years of age.

Their life plans were focussed on entering the job market, but they had to overcome addiction problems first. Of the remaining 70 per cent, most left in July 1998. (More than half of the leases—15—end on this date.) Of this group, two women and two men leave in June 1999. These people have finished their educational projects and are staying at the Centre to consolidate their employment positions. The general regulations do not specify the acceptable length of stay; however, a period of two to five years would normally enable most people to achieve their life plan objectives.

The following story illustrates some of the difficulties and achievements of two young adult members of the Centre. The story is true, but their names have been changed to protect their anonymity.

Carl and Nathalie

When they became resident members of the Centre on December 1, 1997, Carl and Nathalie were 25 and 23 years old respectively. They were living as a couple and had a 17-month old daughter, Emilie. Carl and Nathalie were born in Québec City and had lived for a year in Sherbrooke. They received welfare benefits. Neither had finished high school and both had worked for short periods of time in unsteady jobs. During the selection interview, they described their life plan as an educational project. They said they were experiencing considerable difficulty in their roles as parents and as a couple. Their finances were shaky and they had no control over their budget. Carl had a history of psychotropic drug use (intravenous heroin). When they applied, he had just followed a new detoxification program and was abstaining from drugs. Nathalie considered herself a casual user (alcohol and soft drugs). The selection committee's recommendation to the Board of Directors: accept Carl and Nathalie if they agreed to pursue their educational goals, and work at improving their parenting skills, learn to manage their budget, take steps to ensure the

success of their action plan and, for Carl, continue to abstain from drugs.

Difficulties arose quickly. Two months later, Carl had still not enrolled in school; Nathalie was attending school, but she skipped classes regularly. A number of suggestions were provided to improve their parenting skills. The young parents finally got involved to some extent. The young couple then started to express feelings of discomfort with the requirements of their action plan: they began to deny their difficulties, no longer agreed to participate in financial monitoring and demonstrated little acceptance of other resident members. Increasing neighbours' complaints were made regarding the number and kind of people visiting the apartment. The weekly meetings designed to support the young tenants in their search for solutions became confrontational: Carl and Nathalie started to resist, they became non-cooperative, and argued during the interviews. The counsellor decided to meet with them individually to identify their problems clearly; there were many.

Nathalie blamed all her problems on Carl's behaviour, and she was exhausted. She said she could not take care of Emilie alone. She still denied all her own problems; however, she admitted that, when she became exasperated during their many fights, she would sometimes assault Carl. Nathalie confessed her failure to live up to her commitments. She said she was lazy, but she still wanted to continue. She also expressed her trust in the counsellor. Carl confirmed his heroin addiction and said he wanted to stop taking drugs. Most of all, he wanted to stay with Nathalie and be a good father for his child. He admitted Nathalie's verbal and physical assaults, and he felt that she was incapable of ensuring safety and security for their daughter. Carl said that their tense family situation had made him fragile, affected his abstinence and, when he tried to talk to Nathalie about it, she refused to discuss the subject and denied any responsibility.

After his relapse, Carl contacted a streetworker who had helped him in the past, and he decided to go back to therapy. The counsellor encouraged him and thanks to the support of the social

worker, early in February 1998, Carl started his therapy. He was part of the first group of heroin addicts enrolled in the new methadone (synthetic morphine-like substance used as a substitute for morphine in some drug detoxification programs) rehabilitation program. Carl was away for two months and although Nathalie agreed with his decision, she became discouraged about being left alone with her child. Priorities were established in consultation with the counsellor. During that time, according to the counsellor's brief assessment, Emilie showed signs of hyperactivity, possibly as a result, in part, of malnutrition. It was also agreed that the counsellor, along with the nurse, would look for a day-care centre for the child as a preventive measure to correct her behaviour.

In mid-March 1998, the relationship of trust between the counsellor and Nathalie broke down: Nathalie did not live up to her commitments and would not accept the counsellor's report. Early in April, Carl returned. He continued his recovery, attending psychotherapy. He took Nathalie's side in the dispute, refusing to meet with the counsellor. In May, Nathalie and Carl were called before the Board of Directors. Their neighbours had filed numerous complaints about the couple's constant arguing, which took place any time, day or night. Members of the Board of Directors decided that Carl would have to move out of the residence. Nathalie could keep the apartment but had to get back on track. For the next three months, the counsellor would report on the developments at board meetings. The next day, the counsellor met with Nathalie and Carl together. Although extremely difficult, this meeting was a determining factor in Nathalie's decision to get on with her life and continue counselling.

By December 1998, Nathalie was speaking with her counsellor as an equal, she lived up to her responsibilities as a member and was appreciated by her peers. She was proud of herself. Carl continued to abstain from drugs and finished a program in one of the work experience/training platforms. He and Nathalie have since begun a new relationship and hope to resume their life together. Obviously, the young couple's difficulties are not over yet. The situation is still shaky.

However, like many others before them, they say they will never go back. They have control for the present. Recently, Nathalie offered to speak about her experiences during the Centre's presentations to outsiders. Carl and Nathalie have made a great deal of progress in the last year, thanks especially to Carl who, in spite of his own problems,

continued to seek out answers. He reflected on his life and was ready to make major changes. He simply needed someone to trust him. The support and encouragement provided to Carl and Nathalie have prepared and lighted their way; the success now belongs to them.

MANAGEMENT PROFILE

The key players at the Centre are the members themselves (an average of 60 people, since 1995). Resident or not, the only status is active member; the important criterion being interest in the Centre and its development. To become a member, you must be between 16 and 30 years old. An older member may be accepted under some conditions—based on a ratio of 80 per cent of members 30 years or younger, and 20 per cent 31 and older. To encourage the involvement of a greater number of people, Centre employees, resource team workers and the members of the Board of Directors, over 30 years of age, are not included in the 20 per cent portion. To become a member—and this is the most important condition—people must respect the Centre's code of living, take active responsibility toward implementing a life plan, be interested in community living and take part in the democratic life of the Centre on a regular basis.

Non-resident members pay minimum annual dues (\$5) and have access to a range of services, which are provided free-of-charge, as much as possible. Resident members pay \$120 annual fees (reduced to \$90 under certain conditions) and they get an apartment at a cost corresponding to 25 per cent of their income, or approximately \$150 to \$250 monthly. When fees are charged for specific activities, these events are always offered to members at a reduced cost. Only members have decision-making power on the representative councils—committees, and general and monthly assemblies. Only members can vote or be elected. Members must provide 50 hours of volunteer service per year, either in social or artistic activities or on committees and in assemblies.

The general assembly includes all active members (approximately 50 people) and eligible visitors. It takes place at least four times a year. The annual general assembly is held within three months following the end of the fiscal year. At least one third of active members must be present to have a general assembly quorum. The regular general assembly is called by the Board of Directors, at least three times a year. The purpose of these

assemblies is to discuss operations and activities. Special general assemblies are called by the Board or by a minimum of one third of active members of the corporation, as required, with a minimum of three days advance notice. Informational general assemblies are called by the Centre coordinating committee or by the executive, for any subject about which members must be informed. The purpose of these assemblies is strictly informational.

The Board of Directors consists of nine people, six of whom must be young people: one chairperson, one community life representative and one representative of non-residential members. All three are elected by the general assembly from among those eligible among 16 to 30 year olds. Three resident representatives are appointed by the tenants' assembly and elected by the general assembly. One representative of the salaried basic work team is elected by the general assembly. Two resource persons are co-opted according to Centre requirements for the year, selected by board members and approved by the general assembly. Five members must be present for a board meeting quorum. Terms for individuals elected to the Board of Directors are two years. The Board meets at least once a month.

The executive (established in spring of 1998) consists of five people: the chairperson of the Board of Directors, the employee representative to the Board, two board members appointed by their peers during the first formal meeting of the new Board, and the employee in charge of administration. Three of these members must be present for an executive quorum. The executive meets every month, before board meetings. To ensure fulfilment of mandates, other committees support the executive.

The Coordinating Committee (established in the spring of 1998) consists of all employees of the basic team, one delegate from each project management committee (at the present time, the Tam Tam Café, the Ateliers à la terre agricultural

workshops and Pouce Vert woodworking shop), two board representatives, including one member of the executive, and two resource persons. The committee meets monthly. Ad hoc working committees are also set up, as required.

The work experience/training platforms and committees include all interested participants and resource persons, as required. Participants learn to recognize their strengths and interests, develop new skills and abilities, and work as a team as they gain hands-on experience in democratic living. The work experience/training platforms and committees enable the Centre to organize the development of various services and activities, in keeping with general assembly guidelines and priorities, and the involvement of a greater number of participants.

Among the committees, the tenants' assembly (duplicated at the executive level by the in-house committee) consists of all resident members (average participation rate 80 per cent). Its purpose is to discuss specific situations affecting residential life, organize maintenance for common areas, develop good-neighbour relationships among tenants, form special subcommittees (as required) and, once a year, elect three tenant representatives to the Board of Directors (one of whom also serves as a member of the tenant selection committee). The tenants' assembly meets at least four times a year and is used as an opportunity to introduce new tenants to other residents and to discuss specific problems in the building.

Each team is relatively independent once its guidelines and operational procedures have been approved by the general assembly. Each committee or work experience/training platform meets at least once a month. Each one is supervised by the coordinating team and, ultimately, the Board of Directors. Each committee or team receives necessary operational support: budget, resource persons, supervision, administrative facilities and supplies, recruiting and training. Co-management is encouraged within each team: everyone may take responsibility and get involved. Work experience/training teams are also associated with

an educational supervisor who monitors participants specifically according to project objectives. For business-related projects, there is an administrative monitoring committee. Employees refer to this committee to verify certain actions before suggesting them to the Board of Directors or to the executive. The monitoring committee provides an ongoing assessment of project operations. The committee acts as an ad hoc advisory body to the Board of Directors which may, in part, be composed of outside people and project delegates.

The salaried employees of the Centre make up the basic work team. It includes five Centre members (four full-time and one part-time), who are eligible to sit on the Board (one position) and vote at the general assembly. Employees essentially operate on a per project basis. Since 1998, the team, in conjunction with the coordinating committee and the executive, has been responsible for coordinating on-site activities and operating existing Centre services. However, the basic team has no formal power and remains under the authority of the Board of Directors.

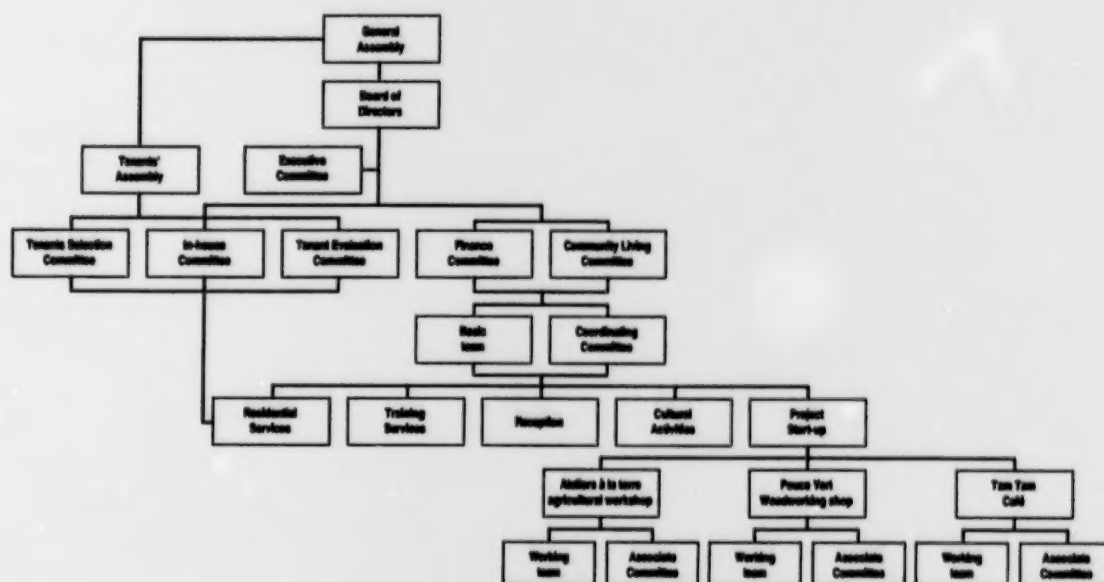
For the last two years, in addition to this structure, there have been training platforms related to projects initiated by the members in the various training groups and workshops. Soon the Ateliers à la terre agricultural workshops will have four employees—three agricultural workers and one community organizer. The training platform will also be able to employ a minimum of 20 people in the on-the-job agricultural training. The Tam Tam Café supports three salaried employees—head chef, program manager and administrative manager. This training platform can accommodate about 10 interns. A work committee made up of Café employees, interested volunteers (10) and the coordinator meets once a week to divide up and monitor duties. The Pouce Vert woodworking shop has led to the creation of two full-time (32 hours) jobs since April 1998. This training platform can accommodate five or six people preparing for social or professional integration. For all the work experience/training platforms, on-the-job training is provided to support development of skills required for proper program and committee

operations (meeting secretary, communications and chairing techniques, use of computer systems, etc.).

Besides the people who perform the aforementioned tasks, the Centre also has two facilitators or resource persons: Jacques Laverdière and Serge Gagné. Agreements with their employers have allowed them to devote a significant amount of their work days to the Centre. These positions are gradually moving toward a co-opting method.

The Centre's constitution and by-laws outline the organization's basic management principles. The 1989-99 action plan calls for publication of a procedural guide containing regulations and policies. This should enhance members' understanding, especially of the Centre's residential program. More in-depth support for the training of elected executive and board members is provided.

Organizational diagram for the Centre résidentiel et communautaire Jacques-Cartier
January 1999



FINANCIAL PROFILE

The organization's financial statements list the activities associated with the Centre's residential and community programs. Only the residential program is funded by the CMHC/SHQ agreement. An innovative feature of the Centre is the combination of these two programs in one location. The combined approach enables us to respond to the individuals' basic needs: physiological, security, self-esteem and personal

development. By providing affordable quality housing, the residential portion adequately satisfies security requirements. All other needs are addressed through the activities and services provided by the community program: reception and listening, and a member service. The following chart outlines the financial portrait of the Centre by program, as shown on the audited financial statements for 1997.

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM	COMMUNITY PROGRAM
Purchase and conversion \$1,457,008 Totally financed by the CMHC/SHQ agreement, equal to the amount of the mortgage	Purchase and conversion \$180,603 Totally financed by community program operating funds
Annual operating cost \$223,711 <i>Sources of financing</i> Operating subsidies \$175,710 Rental income \$55,556 Interest \$258 Average operating costs for full years of operation (1995-1996-1997) was \$222,800	Annual operating cost \$299,304 <i>Sources of financing</i> Subsidies from government and institutional agencies (total of 14 institutions and agencies) \$213,450 Subsidies from private agencies (total of 11 agencies) \$67,044 <i>Funding campaign</i> 1995: \$1,172 1996: \$599 1997: \$2,790 The amount of time and energy devoted to developing and maintaining the financial structure allowed little time for self-sustaining activities. In the 1998-1999 Work Plan, members expressed their willingness to set up a finance committee to organize and implement fund raising activities, in cooperation with members.
Partnerships CMHC, SHQ, Caisse d'Économie des travailleuses et travailleurs de Québec, Fédération régionale des coopératives d'habitation de Québec (FRÉCHAQ).	Partnerships Even more diversified than for financing, all projects, including training and cultural events, are implemented in conjunction with groups and institutions in the environment.
Budget Fairly stable; expenses recur and are authorized annually by the SHQ. Some work made necessary due to normal wear and tear (new flooring in the apartments, paint for hallways and laundry rooms, etc.) call for additional expenditures. We use replacement reserve funds for this purpose.	Budget Increasing, depending on development of activities and services provided. The major expense is salaries—\$128,283. It should also be noted that job creation for the Centre's three work experience/training platforms is partially subsidized, but it has produced a major increase in expenses (1995: \$42,347, 1996: \$70,727, 1997: \$128,283).

In conclusion, financial autonomy for the residential phase is guaranteed by the CMHC/SHQ agreement and gives Centre members a feeling of security for the future, enabling them to devote more energy to ensure the survival of the community program. However, in the community program, lack of balance between the growth of services and

increased income required to ensure fiscal health brings excessive pressure on the sources of revenue associated with the commercial activities of the work experience/training platforms. In the community program, the financial risk is high and the future uncertain.

Principles

The declaration of the Centre's principles, recorded in the general regulations, sets the tone for the Centre's mission: a place to come together and take action, based on a desire to achieve, encouraging the involvement of every individual and social renewal.

Values

Centre values are based on respect for individuals, democratic involvement, environmental conservation and sustainable development, creation of social alternatives and economic development.

Objectives

The Centre can help individuals to make their way, by supporting eligible projects and by doing its best to guide individuals toward self-fulfilment. The objectives for helping individuals include independence and personal development, training and employability, civic involvement and a sense of community. The Centre's statement of principles reflects the following objectives.

Code of Living

In addition to its statement of principles and charter, the Centre has a code of living, a key element in defining the organization. This code is the body of the rules, methods, values and principles which

must be shared by all Centre members and guests. It is in itself a regulation for which any violation, lack of respect or failure to implement may result in suspension or revocation of membership status. Far from being a restrictive element, the code of living is seen as a tool to promote harmony—a measure of quality of life. For the organization, the code is the focal point to ensure the development of a community environment that respects the individual. Some elements of the code of living apply to all members, while others refer specifically to resident members.

Membership Contract

The code of living also entails the notion of a membership contract. The membership contract is an agreement between the Centre and the young person and lists the duties and responsibilities of each party vis-à-vis the community, and the residential services provided by the Centre. Each young person enrolled in the residential program or taking an active part in the community program must sign a membership contract.

The inclusion of the Centre's values has an immediate effect on members. They develop pride in the community to which they belong and in the work accomplished. At the Centre, living means involvement, cooperation and action. Beyond mutual assistance, this notion calls for solidarity among all members to create a responsible society.

APPENDIX A: SOURCES

In-House Documents

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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESIDENT MEMBERS

- ☐ Age, location (resident, non-resident)
- ☐ How long have you been a member?
- ☐ How did you find out about the Centre?
- ☐ How and why did you become a member? What did you need? What obstacles did you face?
- ☐ What did you find at the Centre that you couldn't find elsewhere? What support does the Centre give you?
- ☐ What do you think are the Centre's objectives?
- ☐ Participation in which activities, committees, etc.?
- ☐ What has the Centre enabled you to achieve? What role does it play in your life?
- ☐ Have you noticed any progress in the Centre's project?
- ☐ How do you see your future?

Phoenix Youth Programs

(Halifax, Nova Scotia)

Prepared by:

Phoenix Youth Programs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The history of Phoenix Youth Programs dates back to 1984, when five community members, from within the social services network of Halifax, Nova Scotia, began to meet to discuss the housing crisis in Halifax. This housing crisis trend, which began in the early 1980s, resulted in many young people, including single mothers with small children, being denied financial aid and housing. The facilities that existed were designed to meet the shelter needs of older men; young men and women were seeking shelter and finding no resources or supports available to them.

In 1987, Phoenix House opened as a mixed-gender, long-term facility for homeless youth. Since that time, three additional projects have been developed within Phoenix Youth Programs, specifically, the Follow Up Program, to provide ongoing supports to clients after leaving the residential programs, the Supervised Apartment Program, an independent living option, and the Phoenix Centre for Youth, a drop-in facility offering day services and advocacy for youth in need.

The Association is governed by a board of directors, which is responsible for the long-term planning and financial stability of the organization. The executive director oversees the development, planning and fiscal management of the Association, with the director of community programming responsible for the daily operations of the four programs. Each program is led by a director or coordinator, with each team having a staff complement of full-time and casual employees.

The philosophy of the organization is to recognize that adult homelessness is a cycle that often begins in adolescence and can lead to a life-long dependence on social assistance. Phoenix Youth Programs has dedicated itself to the belief and the approach that through validation of experience, valuing of the worth, dignity and potential of every human being, and ensuring access to resources, young people who have been marginalized can begin to feel that their efforts to improve their lives can be realized. Through offering safe, supportive housing and advocacy, meaningful changes can happen in the lives of young people.

FACT SHEET

Phoenix Youth Programs⁴

6035 Coburg Road
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 1Y8

Description

Phoenix Youth Programs consists of four programs, which operate on the commitment to a continuum of care of long-term and multi-level services to homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness.

- Phoenix Centre for Youth (opened in 1994) – a street-front, walk-in service offering counselling, referral to community resources and advocacy. This program is located at 6035 Coburg Road in Halifax, Nova Scotia and is also the business centre for the Association.
- Phoenix House (opened in 1987) - a 10-bed residential facility for males and females. This program is located at 2385 Hunter Street in Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- Supervised Apartment Program (opened in 1992) - three independently rented units within which three clients reside with a live-in support person hired by Phoenix Youth Programs. The addresses for these units are within close walking distance from Phoenix House. The exact addresses are not publicized due to respect for the privacy of the clients and the commitment for the tenants of the buildings to be accepted into their respective neighbourhoods as non-distinct citizens.
- Follow Up Program (established in 1988) – a program offering ongoing continuity of support and crisis intervention. This program is operated out of the building at 6035 Coburg Road, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Obstacles

The major obstacles experienced at the outset of the Association were the dismissal by the local politicians that a housing crisis existed for young

people in Metro Halifax. There was no forum for discussion and there were no supporters willing to discuss the dilemma of this lack of service provision to young people. Although there was vehement opposition by some portions of the community to a facility established for teenagers, the greatest support came from other members of the community who were committed, through their personal and professional efforts, to the project.

Finances

The operating budget for the 1998-99 fiscal year is \$914,838. As of January 1999, there are no capital costs. This is due to an arrangement with a charitable organization whose mandate it is to advance the interests of children and youth in Nova Scotia. Through this supportive affiliation, the buildings for Phoenix House and Phoenix Centre for Youth are provided at minimal cost for the Association's use. The units used by the Supervised Apartment Program are rented, with the rent for these units budgeted accordingly into the per diem costs for each of the clients.

The breakdown of sources of funding is approximately 70 per cent provincial government support and 30 per cent fund raising within the community, including support from service clubs, churches, corporations, foundations, individuals and special projects.

Mandate

The mandate for Phoenix Youth Programs is to provide long-term, integrated services of support to male and female youth, both homeless and at risk of homelessness, between the ages of 16 and 24 years. There is strong commitment to identifying and examining the political and social issues associated with the homeless youth population, and dedication to the provision of services and support with sensitivity to issues of gender, ethnicity, class, ability, sexual orientation and all marginalizing factors.

Innovative features

The primary innovative feature of the Association is that, through the four programs, a "continuum of care" is provided, beginning with emergency support, to long-term, supportive and structured living, to independent living, to after-care services.

Major challenges

A major challenge to be faced in the next five years and on an ongoing basis is the financial security of the Association, as a result of the increase in the number of youth in need of supportive services.

Contact

Timothy Crooks, Executive Director

PROJECT HISTORY

In 1984, five concerned community members began to gather and discuss changes they were witnessing to the population of homeless people in the greater Halifax area. These community members worked within charitable organizations, a health care centre and a non-profit women's shelter, and were actively in contact with street front facilities designed to provide accessible services to persons in need. The trend they were noticing was that increasing numbers of teenagers were not simply hanging around on the streets, but living on the streets. They determined that a supportive residence, qualitatively different to the shelters in operation for adult homeless people, should be considered to address this growing problem.

Sister Evelyn Pollard, Father Peter McKenna, Pauline Leppard, Dr. John Fraser and Paul O'Hara began to meet and discuss how such a facility could be realized. The primary obstacle was that there was no provision in the legislation for municipal social assistance to provide financial aid to persons under the age of 19 years. Politicians did not acknowledge that this population might be growing and therefore that services were needed. The Children's Aid Society of Halifax and the Department of Community Services in Dartmouth and Sackville were primarily responsible for children up to the age of 16 years; however, there was no locus of responsibility for youth between the ages of 16 and 19 years.

The social context mirrored the political reality as well: teenagers not living at home were seen to be troublemakers who could return home if they would only abide by the rules of their parents. Neighbourhoods were reluctant to accept a residential facility for homeless youth into their midst, assuming that these must be "bad kids" involved in criminal activity, prostitution and school avoidance. There was limited acceptance of the fact that many street kids may be told to leave their homes, or have to leave the living environment due to abusive, exploitative or unsafe living conditions.

The objectives at the start of the project were to fight these political and social contexts and to advocate for young people who were in need of a supportive home. Great pains were taken to ensure that Phoenix House would not be a traditionally defined "shelter," due to the conditions present in some traditional shelters, which were often victim-blaming and exploitative. The first practical step was to ensure the support of the federal, provincial and municipal governments, to commit financial and philosophical aid to the project. Service clubs, churches, businesses and foundations were also approached and lobbied, and neighbourhoods amiable to building an alliance with the Association were sought.

The obstacles that were encountered along the way included the resounding message returned from all three levels of government that "this is not our problem"; the governmental levels were suggesting that this project be a private, corporate initiative. Further, neighbourhoods presented petitions, disallowing a facility which they assumed would attract perceived drug dealers and pedophiles into their residential areas. The suggestion posited by many was to keep all homeless people in the neighbourhood occupied by Hope Cottage, a soup kitchen, and AdSum House, a woman's shelter, "where they belong." Others stated that the greater need was for the education and job preparation of young people. There was concern that a residence would create dependency on the social assistance system and the community for ongoing support.

The turning point was the decision by a local charitable foundation to buy the building, which became known as Phoenix House, even before there was an established agreement for the funding of the facility. It was this commitment to the project and the philosophical principles that began to invoke the support of the municipal and provincial levels of government.

The dedication of the founding members of the Association led to the final realization of the goal of Phoenix House opening. They were proactive,

creative and thorough in developing the necessary strategies for success, including forming close alliances between churches and politicians, targeting specific contacts and utilizing an educational approach with the public. Every possible avenue of support was sought and, ultimately, the supportive community spoke louder than the politicians and citizens who were opposed to the project, and enhanced the voices of those politicians who believed that homeless youth deserved this service.

Over time, the Association has grown in its development of programs, now designed to meet a broad range of client needs. The commitment to long-term support has always been the mandate of the organization, and over the last 11 years this has come to be realized, through the continuum of care offered beyond Phoenix House, through the Follow Up Program, the Supervised Apartment Program and the Phoenix Centre for Youth. There have been changes in the clientele, in that there are increasing numbers of young people seeking

help in conflictual family situations, although not all of them are attempting to leave home. In addition, many of the young people now seen have experienced a multitude of crises, such that their lives and difficulties are complex and require many interventions. The one consistent element over time, however, has been that all the young people who approach Phoenix Youth Programs are looking for a place to belong, for safety and support, and for the opportunity to make changes in their troubled lives.

Philosophically, Phoenix Youth Programs has evolved from being a somewhat insular program (necessary at the outset to establish itself) to becoming a venue for the voice of homeless and at-risk youth in Nova Scotia. Phoenix Youth Programs has adopted a model of services to homeless youth based on entitlement: the Association exists due to a conviction that young people are entitled to be well cared for in our community.

CLIENT PROFILE

Clients served by Phoenix Youth Programs are male and female, between the ages of 16 and 24 years. All clients are homeless, at risk of homelessness or in transition toward independence. Many have suffered physical, sexual or emotional abuse at the hands of their parents or "caregivers." Some have been involved with criminal activity and alcohol/drug addictions. Many have begun high school education and some have attended a post-secondary institution and have earned degrees and diplomas. Several have long-term, positive employment records; a number have participated in the peer facilitation of teen groups and have become public speakers on youth homelessness and the associated social issues.

Clients of the residential programs, namely Phoenix House and the Supervised Apartment Program, must attend a daily program of an education or employment preparation nature and participate fully in the operation of their home. Some have part-time employment; many are involved with extra-curricular activities, for example, music lessons, sports and community groups.

Further discussion of the client statistics will be outlined per program. The following figures represent the clients served in the year ending December 31, 1997.

Phoenix Centre for Youth

The total number of individual clients served at the Phoenix Centre for Youth between the opening of the facility in August 1994 and December 1997 was 700.

The total number of contacts made through the Centre in the year 1997 was 5,255. Contacts are defined as the number of separate times an individual has entered the Centre to access the services provided, as opposed to the number of actual individuals who have made use of these services.

A total of 1,392 contacts were made with the health centre nurse in the year 1997.

In the last four years, changes to the clientele have primarily included increasing numbers of young people in need of services. In particular, young men in need of emergency shelter has been a priority in the Halifax area. Youth with complex mental health issues are also recognized to be an underserved population in Metro Halifax, and the options for their residential care are limited. On a positive note, increasing and close referral contact with other community support services and programs has aided the diverse needs of the clients, for example, liaison with Choices Adolescent Drug Treatment Program, AdSum House (a shelter for homeless women and their children), Metro Area Planned Parenthood and the Department of Community Services Income Assistance offices.

Phoenix House

In 1997, there were 70 referrals made to Phoenix House. Of these, 40 were male referrals and 30 were female referrals. A total of 19 youth were admitted to the program. The discrepancy in numbers (that 70 referrals were made and only 19 were admitted) reflects the need for residential placement for youth between the ages of 16 and 24 years of age. The average age of clients was 17 years.

Changes in the population of youth entering Phoenix House, since it opened in 1987 have in some ways, led to the development of the subsequent three programs. For example, it was noted soon after the Phoenix House program began, that ongoing services of support were required to aid the transition from Phoenix House to independent living. Thus, the Follow Up Program was initiated. In 1992, after watching many of the young people leaving the structured, fully staffed Phoenix House residence and enter substandard rooming houses only to face financial instability, uncertainty regarding bill payment and

overwhelming loneliness, the shape of the Supervised Apartment Program began to form. Finally, when ongoing research across the Metro Halifax area revealed the lack of accessible, street-front services for youth requiring advocacy, housing and support, the Phoenix Centre for Youth was developed and opened.

Within the Phoenix House program itself, it has been noted that, due to the gulf in services for youth ages 16 to 19 across Nova Scotia, Phoenix House is often asked to be a "catch-all" residence for young people with a myriad of problematic lives and issues, including mental health concerns, physical challenges, sexual offences and other traumas. Treatment services are not within the mandate of Phoenix House itself, and treatment services and support are often not readily available in the community. Thus, the gulf of comprehensive services to youth between the ages of 16 and 19 years in many ways is not being remedied.

In addition, due to the financial constraints imposed by the provincial government, on the child welfare agencies in the province, many young people in the care of the Minister of Community Services, who experience a multitude of problems and intergenerational issues of abuse and neglect, may leave that system with many unresolved difficulties. For example, they may require specialized foster homes, which are not available; they may require family mediation, therapy or respite, which is time limited; or they may have undiagnosed mental health concerns. When these youth are no longer eligible for care provided through the Department of Community Services, Phoenix House is one of the few options for residential care available to them. Thus, the clientele at Phoenix House has seen a general trend toward more complicated individual lives and family-of-origin issues.

Supervised Apartment Program

In the 1997 year, 31 referrals were made to the Supervised Apartment Program. Of these, 18 were referrals for males and 13 were referrals for

females. Total admissions for the year were 14. The average length of stay was seven months. To date, the number of clients who have lived in the Supervised Apartment Program since its opening in June 1992 is 71.

The youth residing in the Supervised Apartment Program have been perhaps the least varied since its inception in 1992. This may be due, in part, to the in-depth interviewing process, which is necessary to ensure safety and security in the homes at all times. Given the limited supervision, and focus on independence and responsibility, a consistently high priority within the program is to evaluate closely all potential clients, and make sound judgments regarding appropriateness for placement. For example, a client who requires close monitoring, a highly structured living environment and continual access to support would not be eligible for the Supervised Apartment Program, and would be referred to Phoenix House. In addition, the nature of the program has been to emphasize negotiation and flexibility, where possible, in client and program-based decisions, which allows for creative problem solving regarding client needs.

Follow Up Program

The Follow Up Program recorded 176 contacts made with past clients of the two residential programs in 1997. Again, as noted above, contacts are not necessarily individual clients but the number of times a Follow Up client has made contact with the Program staff through the Phoenix Centre for Youth.

To date, the number of individual clients who have made use of the Follow Up Program since its inception in 1989 is 310. This number includes past clients of both residential programs.

Client Stories

The following are client stories provided with permission by young persons involved with each of the four programs. The stories have been written "in their own words" and the names have

been changed to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the clients.

Phoenix Centre for Youth

My name is Karl and I have been using the services of the Phoenix Centre for Youth since 1995. As a client of the Centre, I have experienced most of the services that they have to offer, such as counselling, health care, laundry facilities, use of a separate phone line and a very personable, positive atmosphere.

By taking advantage of these services and by accepting the positive atmosphere, I have gone from being helpless to hopeful. When I was first introduced to the Phoenix Centre for Youth, I had been staying at the Metro Turning Point and feared that my situation would worsen, but with the assistance of the dedicated staff and support through the positive attitudes, this has encouraged me to get where I am today. At present, I am living in my own apartment, providing for myself through employment and seeking to further my education through the Centre to reach my goal of self-dependence.

Although my situation has improved, I still rely on the services provided by the Centre. I believe that my motivation toward this goal has been made possible with the sense of security that I have in the Centre staff.

Phoenix House

My name is Sadie and I am a resident of Phoenix House. I'm going to let you know how important Phoenix House is to our community, youth and me. A lot of youth come to the Phoenix Youth Programs with many different problems and, like me, are very scared to ask for help. When you have no place to lay your head at night and no food in your stomach, you really ask yourself, "Is there somewhere better I can go?"

A lot of people in the outside world think teens leave home because they don't like the rules their parents give them. That's not true. If you had a parent constantly yelling at you, beating you or even having sexual contact with you, you'd only be able to take it for so long. A confused, lonely

teenager can only think, "I have to get out of here." I was actually taken out of my home. I had no idea what was going to happen to me. When I arrived at Phoenix House, I had a big problem trusting adults. My first stay at Phoenix House lasted for seven months. Soon after I left, I realized I had made a big mistake. A lot of my problems were still not out in the open and where I was I didn't have anybody to talk to about them. It was then that I realized that Phoenix was helping me and did care about what happens to me. I missed everybody and everything they helped me accomplish. I arranged to move back in.

Just the fall that passed I got my grade 10 credits. I haven't passed a grade since grade 6, but while I'm proud of myself I am also very grateful for the motivation, support and help Phoenix staff and residents have given to me. I wouldn't have been able to do it by myself. Because of the help I have received, I'm currently in grade 11 and look forward to each day at school. I've also worked through a lot of my problems and am enjoying a normal teenager's life.

Supervised Apartment Program

My name is Maria. I am 19 years old and have been a resident of the Supervised Apartment Program (SAP) for over a year.

Due to personal reasons, I had to move out of my home when I was 16 years old, and I went to live with my partner. I dropped out of school and tried to find work to help support us. After several moves to different apartments and always being broke, I decided I needed to make some changes in my life. I received some information from my social worker about Phoenix House and SAP. I was living at AdSum House when I found out I was accepted into SAP.

I was excited but also very scared about moving into SAP. I had always thought these types of homes were for rebellious and out-of-control teens. Boy was I wrong. I met a lot of young adults who had gone through the same situations as myself. It was comforting to know that I wasn't alone.

I moved into SAP on March 16, 1997. Since then, I have had a number of ups and downs. Everything from personal health problems, to conflicts with roommates and discussions with staff, including the consequences that accompanied the situations. When I first moved into SAP, I was a scared little girl with a bad attitude and even worse temper. I did not trust anyone and I had extremely bad communication skills. During this time, the staff never judged me. They gave me a fair and honest chance. They were, and still are, very patient and supportive. They care about each resident individually. We are real people to them, and not just another case number. The staff have genuine faith and confidence in each one of us. They push each of us to our personal limits and help us during each step along the way. SAP has given me the chance to get my life back on track.

I am currently back in school, with the goal to complete the requirements for my grade 12 diploma. I then have plans to go on to university and become a veterinarian for large animals. SAP has also taught me some valuable lessons about life. I have learned how to be more independent by learning how to budget my money properly and pay my bills. I have learned how to interact with people on a more mature level. And, most important, I have learned that I am not alone and that I can trust people.

Follow Up Program

My name is Devina and I have been involved with Phoenix House, the Supervised Apartment Program and the Follow Up Program, in which I am currently involved.

Over the last three years, through their many services, I have learned a great deal about myself and my environment. Some of the skills I have learned through the counsellors are things like how to build my self-esteem, stress and crisis management and the most important thing I have learned is trust.

At the Centre they offer many services anyone is able to access. They have a guy who will cut hair for free, a guy who does HIV testing, I can do my laundry or have a shower. All of this for free. I can drop in and talk to the nurse about health problems concerning my daughter or myself, I can talk to any of the counsellors, or just drop in to say hi. I know if I run into an emergency with food or prescriptions, I can count on the Follow Up Program to help me out.

Through the help of Phoenix Youth Programs, I have been able to reach a goal of mine. I was able to go to university. I was able to receive a scholarship. I owe a lot to the Follow Up Program. They have supported me in rough times and smile with me in good times. Thanks for the help.

MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Permanent Staff

During 1998, there were 24 permanent, full-time positions within the Phoenix Youth Programs. Their position titles are as follows, separated by program.

Each program has a team leader, termed either director or coordinator, whose responsibilities include the development and management of services provided to clients of the particular program and the supervision and evaluation of the staff therein. The exception to this definition is the Follow Up Program coordinator, who is assisted in maintaining contact with Follow Up Program clients by the case managers of the Phoenix Centre for Youth and does not supervise and evaluate these staff members (this responsibility is that of the director of the Phoenix Centre for Youth).

Phoenix Centre for Youth

Director

Case managers (three): responsible for specific case management duties in relation to their client caseload within the Phoenix Centre for Youth.

Health centre nurse: responsible for the provision of health care services to clients of the Association.

Intake/youth care worker: responsible for the welcoming of clients and community members entering the Phoenix Centre for Youth.

Phoenix House

Director

Key counsellors (five): responsible for specific case management duties in relation to their assigned clients.

Volunteer and household coordinator: responsible for the organization and supervision of the volunteers within the Association; responsible

for the daily maintenance and upgrading of the physical facility.

Supervised Apartment Program

Coordinator

Assistant coordinator: responsible for the management of services provided to clients of the Supervised Apartment Program.

Live-in support persons (three): responsible to supervise and support the clients of the program, within the home, on a daily basis.

Follow Up Program

Coordinator

Administration

Executive director: responsible for the overall design, implementation and progress of initiatives of all programs, staff and client services.

Director of community programming: responsible for the development and operational consultation of the four programs.

Director of development: responsible for the development of fund-raising capital to the Association.

Program assistant: responsible for the administrative support of the duties of the executive director and administrative staff.

Bookkeeper: responsible for the detailed and accurate management of the Association's financial recordings.

Part-Time Staff

The majority of part-time staff are employed on a "casual" basis, meaning that their services are contracted for particular shifts or duties. In 1997,

Phoenix House had, on average, a roster of 15 casual staff, who replaced one counsellor per shift, and maintained the routine of the house in the absence of the key counsellor. Phoenix Centre for Youth had, on average, a roster of 10 casual staff who performed similar functions, replacing the case managers or front desk reception staff as needed.

The Supervised Apartment Program uses casual staff in a different manner. Due to the structure of the program, casual staff are required to replace the live-in support persons when they are absent. This duty means staying overnight or longer in one of the three units, assuming the functions of the live-in support person. In 1997, there were five casual staff who fulfilled this role.

In most cases, once trained in the particular needs of each program, the casual staff of the Association work across all programs.

There were three part-time positions in the 1997 year which did not fit this description. A part-time nurse worked in the health centre one day per week, assuming the role and responsibilities of the full-time nurse. In addition, there are two youth positions at the Phoenix Centre for Youth, including a maintenance position (six hours per week), responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the Phoenix Centre for Youth building and a hairstylist position (four hours per week), providing haircuts to the clients of the Phoenix Centre for Youth.

Volunteers

In the 1997 operating year, there were 47 people involved with the volunteer program of Phoenix Youth Programs on a regular basis. Their roles ranged from preparing and serving food, to painting bedrooms, sorting linens, restocking supply shelves, attending fund-raising events, tutoring, providing music lessons, organizing recreational activities and much more.

In addition to these regular volunteers, Phoenix Youth Programs also benefits from community

members and organizations choosing to volunteer their time, for a specific period, to perform a specific function for the Association. For example, staff members employed through the Body Shop Incorporated prepare the evening meal at Phoenix House one night per week. In 1997, there were 20 such persons who volunteered their time in this way. There are several professional therapists in the community who volunteer "in kind" services on an ongoing basis. In addition, the Nova Scotia Home Builders Association spent one day in October 1998 completing renovations at Phoenix House, including replacing windows, repainting the kitchen, reconditioning cupboards and repairing bathroom fixtures. Community groups and associations are a continual source of volunteer effort which directly benefits Phoenix Youth Programs.

Decision-Making Power

The ultimate authority in decision making is the Board of Directors. However, within each program there is significant autonomy and power to make decisions. For example, the team leader of each program is responsible to make appropriate case management decisions, and remain within budget; they are fully accountable for these decisions.

The Administrative Team, consisting of the director or coordinator of each program, meets monthly to consult on program extensions, development and broad program-based goals and to provide another forum for decision making, prior to and in coordination with board approval.

The director of community programming is the operational consultant to each of the four programs, and is responsible for decisions leading to policy development and new initiatives, in consultation with the executive director. The executive director provides ultimate approval for the directions sought by the Administrative Team and the director of community programming.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors comprises 16 individuals who commit their time to the Association on a volunteer basis.

The Executive Committee comprises chair, vice-chair, treasurer, committee chairs and secretary.

The committees are as follows:

Finance, Maintenance, Personnel, Nominating, Fund Raising and Priorities and Planning.

There are 10 members at large sitting on the Board of Directors, including a youth representative position. The executive director sits on the Board as an ex-officio member.

The general mandate of the Board of Directors is to ensure the long-term welfare and visioning of the Association and the financial health of the programs. Board members act as ambassadors in the community, using their personal resources and professional skills to further meet the mandate of the Board.

Integration of Clients into Management

The original by-laws of Phoenix Youth Programs state that there is provision for a client to be a member of the Board of Directors. In addition, a fundamental tenet of the development of the Association has been a commitment to meet client-stated needs for services and support. This has occurred through surveys, focus groups, program development meetings for each program, resident meetings and the encouragement of ongoing feedback for effective service provision.

Accountability

The management of the Association is accountable first to the clients of the programs. The central priority is the provision of service with integrity and professionalism, to provide for the long-term needs of youth at risk of homelessness. Second, the management is accountable to the community donors, supporters and the provincial Department

of Community Services, without whose financial aid the services could not be provided. Third, the association management is accountable to the staff, for equitable pay, benefits for service and fair working conditions, to the volunteers, to provide fair and consistent support, and to the Board of Directors, for service provision which meets the standards as set out in the founding constitution of the organization.

Innovative Approaches to Management or Administration

Innovation within Phoenix Youth Programs can be highlighted through the following examples.

- Client integration, designed to gather feedback, have concerns voiced and encourage group cohesion, specifically:
 - resident meetings at Phoenix House on a weekly basis;
 - monthly program nights within the Supervised Apartment Program; and
 - ongoing surveys within the Phoenix Centre for Youth (targeting Follow Up Program clients and Phoenix Centre for Youth clients).
- Client presentations at the annual general meetings. To highlight the importance of the clients' experiences, recent agendas for the annual general meeting have included presentations from a client of each program. The only other presentations are those of the chair of finance and the executive director.
- Personal resources for innovative self-management (PRISM) is an adolescent group format, developed by David Wexler, and designed to promote self-awareness, self-confidence and communication skills, for personal enhancement. The PRISM program has been in operation within Phoenix Youth Programs for three years and uses past client "graduates" as co-facilitators.
- Staff retreats provide an opportunity for reflection, analysis and team building for the

- staff of the entire Association, held once per year.
- Staff development. In addition to designing staff development budgets and needs according to teach program, the following innovations have been developed.
 - Phoenix Centre for Youth staff have a 30-minute debriefing meeting at the beginning of each work day, prior to opening the Centre.
 - Phoenix Centre for Youth and Phoenix House staff have one "down day" per month, when they visit and liaise with community agencies, to foster cooperation and understanding for the benefit of mutual clients.
 - Supervised Apartment Program retreats once every two months, in part to offer respite and new learning opportunities for live-in support persons.
 - The Administrative Committee meets monthly, involving the director/coordinator for each program, the director of community programming and the executive director, to develop program and association goals and planning.
 - The Accessibility Committee's mandate is to ensure ongoing commitment to a working environment sensitive to issues of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability and culture, and to provide monthly staff workshops toward this goal.
 - Board of Directors development meetings are designed to establish future association goals and enhance team building among board members.
 - Strategic planning meetings are held annually to develop cohesion of planning goals between board members and staff members.
 - There is a community office available at the Phoenix Centre for Youth, for use by youth-serving community agencies in the provision of outreach services.
 - Summer grant positions from the Nova Scotia Employment Program for Students.
 - Cost-shared grant positions with the African Canadian Employment Clinic.
 - Two youth employment positions at Phoenix Centre for Youth, namely a youth maintenance position and a youth hairstylist position.
 - Recognition by the Peter F. Drucker Foundation for innovation and resourcefulness in the Supervised Apartment Program.
 - External environment analyses prepared by Robertson Surette, a local firm specializing in human resources management, and master of business administration students from Dalhousie University, for the purposes of the strategic planning of the Association.
 - Recognition by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in 1995 as one of the top 55 innovative service providers to homeless persons in Canada, the United States, Australia and Europe; recognition in 1997 by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation as a Housing Awards finalist.
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FINANCIAL PROFILE

Capital Costs

There are no capital costs relating to the operation of Phoenix Youth Programs. The two buildings, Phoenix House and Phoenix Centre for Youth, are owned by a local charitable foundation and are leased to Phoenix Youth Programs under an arrangement for limited rent payment. The three Supervised Apartment Program units are rented from private property managers, the rent for which is calculated into the per diem rate charged to those responsible for funding the clients of the Program. Equipment that is acquired through donations is not capitalized, as per association policy. Currently, all the computers have been either donated or expensed in the year of acquisition as is standard accounting policy for non-profit organizations.

Annual Operating Cost

The annual operating cost for the year ending March 31, 1999 is \$914,838.

Sources of Funding

The sources of funding for the Association are twofold.

- Approximately 70 per cent comes from the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, strictly related to a per diem formula, plus one annual grant in support of the Phoenix Centre for Youth. The Department of Health has committed to providing an annual grant in support of the Health Centre which operates out of the Phoenix Centre for Youth.
- Approximately 30 per cent is derived from fund-raising activities held throughout the year. Within this 30 per cent is included support gathered from private individuals, corporate donations, in memoriam donations, church groups and foundations.

Fund Raising

The fund-raising objective for year ending March 31, 1999 is \$250,000.

Fund-raising revenues are garnered through church appeals, foundations, individuals, service club and corporate donations, and special events. A sample of the fund-raising activities held by Phoenix Youth Programs in the 1997 year includes:

- an auction highlighting items related to homes/housing/homelessness;
- annual Christmas luncheon;
- annual bowl-a-thon; and
- Christmas sale of poinsettias.

Other funds have been generated by community organizations in support of Phoenix Youth Programs through casual days, raffles, car washes, special events, sales, speaking engagements, auctions, clothing recycling drives, various bingos and a golf tournament.

Partnerships

In 1998, a new partnership was developed between Phoenix Youth Programs and prominent individuals within the community. The purpose of this partnership was to organize a presentation to various corporate entities with the goal to secure their support, through endorsement and in-kind donations.

Changes in the Budget

The budget of the Association has grown to reflect the development of the three subsequent programs, the corresponding increase in clientele and the associated costs in terms of personnel resources and ongoing maintenance. Budget items have not included supplies in direct use by the clients. For example, to date, no fund-raised money has been spent on furnishings. They have been donated by community groups, businesses and individuals.

The Association has adapted to the increased need for financial resources by seeking to broaden the base of support; specifically, by approaching more corporate businesses, churches, service groups and foundations. In addition, there has been a focussed, strategic plan developed in an attempt to secure adequate and stable funding from the provincial government.

Innovative Features

The budgeting process has developed from a set of figures prepared by the Finance Committee (comprising board members) to the process in place since 1998, which involves all program leaders preparing their requested budgets and

submitting these to the Finance Committee. Each director or coordinator receives monthly financial statements and is responsible for the sound operation of the program within his or her budget.

Locally, the Association is somewhat unique in that it is not solely dependent on the provincial government for funding. However, a large fund-raising objective is neither realistic nor achievable. Therefore, the Association is basically "deficit funded," which may be defined as the forecasting of expenses and the occupancy rate in the residences, and the subsequent calculation of the balance needed to meet the operating costs, which is fund raised.

OVERALL PHILOSOPHY OR APPROACH

The philosophy that guides Phoenix Youth Programs has provided the vision and commitment that has propelled this Association from its inception in 1984 to its present day status as a nationally recognized, innovative and comprehensive service to homeless youth in Nova Scotia. Young people fundamentally deserve a safe home and a chance to experience caring supports and opportunities to improve their lives. It is the basic belief that each person deserves the respect, dignity and self-worth that these conditions can help to maximize. Throughout the programs, the staff, the volunteers, the board members, the guidelines for behaviour and the goals for ongoing development, there is dedication to maintaining the integrity of the alliance between the youth served and the person offering support, and to provide services with sensitivity to personal experience, gender, ability, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation.

Phoenix Youth Programs knows there is no single solution to the reality of youth homelessness, because there is no single problem. Great care is taken to learn from clients' experiences; to hear the stories and to ask what is needed to help. When a young person at Phoenix Centre for Youth exuberantly accepts a pair of winter boots, because he has not had anything but sandals to wear through the cold months, the volunteers nearby ask him what else his life has held. When a resident at Phoenix House refuses to eat supper with the large group, a staff member sits with her and listens to stories of being force-fed by her abusive father at the family table. When a Supervised Apartment Program client takes his roommate's stereo without permission, the live-in support person learns the young man believes that soon all the opportunities before him will disappear, just like all the other "good things" that have happened in his life. A Follow Up Program client returns to her Phoenix House key counsellor to tell him that she still hears his words of support, two years after leaving the program.

These actual examples are what drive the vision of the Association to continue to work toward solutions for the multitude of problems that precede and supersede youth homelessness. The clients are the central tenet of policy and program development, and daily practices and operations of programs never stray far from their realities.

Each program has been developed to recognize the multi-faceted needs of the youth population served through the Association. At Phoenix House and in the Supervised Apartment Program, there is a bed in a private bedroom for every resident, there is food for nourishment, there is a safe home to live in. For all clients, there are school tutors, health services, supportive counselling, music lessons, self-esteem workshops, hair cuts, reunion gatherings, shower and laundry facilities, recreation planning, camping trips and countless opportunities through the resources gathered by the staff, volunteers and board members. All combine to provide a long-term continuum of care to homeless youth.

Phoenix Youth Programs has become known in the Metro Halifax community as a voice worth hearing, regarding issues of youth homelessness, poverty, housing needs, discrimination, the potential of young people, and the many social issues that are embedded within this larger context. Speaking engagements seek to garner community support and financial assistance, as well as to inform about the real lives, the dreams and hopes, of young people who are struggling to find a place in the world. Outreach to schools and youth groups seeks to offer alternatives to exploitative or unsafe living conditions. At every opportunity, words are spoken to deconstruct the misconceptions surrounding youth at risk and to build truth in their place.

ENDNOTES

1. Background information on the Downtown Women's Project derives from the project's First Quarterly Report (January 1995) and from an interview with Jannit Rabinovitch.
2. "Fourth (and Final) Quarterly Report, Downtown Women's Project" (December 1995).
3. Jannit Rabinovitch identified a site, wrote a proposal for 25 units of non-market housing for women, received preliminary agreement from the City of Victoria to sell the site, and mobilised about \$2 million from the B.C. Housing Management Commission. Unfortunately, the City ultimately refused to sell the site and B.C. Housing refused to use the funds for an alternative site.
4. Phoenix Youth Programs is the new name for the organization previously known as Long Term Services for Youth Association. At the annual general meeting in April 1998, the name of the Association was officially changed. The primary reason for the change is that the phoenix symbol of hope and renewal is the image that has inspired the development of the organization. Phoenix House, the first project of the organization, and Phoenix Centre for Youth, are the two most high-profile projects, from which a great deal of public awareness is raised.

